Citing/Siting Transnational Feminisms: Academic and Activist Epistemologies

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation addresses the place of transnational feminist activisms (TFA) and especially transnational feminist activist knowledges (TFAK) within the emerging field of transnational feminist studies (TFS). It investigates how TFS developed with so little engagement with TFA/K. The central question used to explore the gap between TFA and TFS is: how is "transnational feminisms" socially and conceptually organized? Using a blended methodology drawn from institutional ethnography and political activist ethnography, I conduct a textual analysis of the academic TF literature as data. More specifically, I explore how conventional scholarly practices socially and conceptually organize the orientations taken by Northern university-based scholars to transnational feminist activisms and their knowledges. I argue that these academic knowledge production practices – citational praxis, citational theorizing, citational disciplining, definitional debates, and frame replacement – have operated and continue to operate as field-building mechanisms during the period when transnational feminisms emerge within the North American academy, constraining lines of inquiry, priorities, and interlocutors. I contend that TFA/K are overwritten in this process, skewing the development of TFS away from movement-engagement and towards a recentering of North American academic positionalities. This interdisciplinary dissertation draws upon Social Movement Learning (SML) and my own experiential learning through TFA in Japan/Asia, in order to suggest ways to make activists' informal learning (IL) and TF movement knowledges more visible in TFS. I argue for the importance of recognizing the context-specific nature of TF activist and academic epistemologies as well as the importance of consciously shifting scholarly orientations to TFAK and IL. The dissertation makes a number of original contributions. It is the first in-depth study to offer an examination of the potential for a synthesis of TFS and SML. The data analysis offers original insights about: a) the role of citational disciplining and citational theorizing within TFS, b) the social and conceptual organization of scholarly orientations towards TFA/K through conventional and subversive academic knowledge production practices that function as field-building mechanisms during the emergence of the field of TFS, c) the ways in which North American scholarly positionalities are recentered even in much TF scholarship on TFA, and d) strategies to make visible and explicit the informal learning and knowledge production that are central to TFA through an interdisciplinary TFS/SML framework.

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It is not a good idea to begin graduate school with a baby on your hip, imagining a timeline that sees you completing fieldwork before said child enters first grade. But, then again, would any of us undertake graduate studies in neoliberal times if we weren't prone to magical thinking? That baby is now taller than me. A cascade of illnesses, accidents, broken bones, family changes, and an ever-growing care-burden made clear what the lack of dissertation research funding had already pointed out: I could not afford to do fieldwork in Japan. In fact, I would be lucky to mine enough time to write a dissertation in my own living room. This dissertation is not the project I had hoped to do, and yet I am grateful for the way in which the confines of my life forced me to think through new ways of working with ideas and texts. I made a number of seemingly expedient choices, and still, it has taken me over a decade to complete my doctoral studies, an indulgence formerly reserved for people who do a few years of fieldwork.

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International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO)
North American (NA)
Political Activist Ethnography (PAE)
Social Movement Learning (SML)
Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs)
Transnational Feminisms (TF)
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Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA)
Transnational Feminisms/Feminist Activisms (TF/A)
Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledges (TFAK)
United Nations (UN)
Women's and Gender Studies (WGS)
World Social Forum (WSF)

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Activism

"Activism" is often used in North American contexts as an umbrella term, one that is stretched to the breaking point as it serves to cover social movements, NGOs, advocacy, networks, activist groups, grassroots efforts, campaigns, and self-organized communities. Each of these referents can span a wide range of ideological and political views. When I use the term activism in this dissertation, I use it in its broadest sense of collective action for social change, regardless of the political ideology that informs such action. In many of the contexts of TFA activism and academia are thought of in binary terms, and activists can also be teachers, researchers, and scholars. The reader is invited to read with less binary understandings of activism in mind.

Advocacy

When I use the term "advocacy," I refer to a narrower range of practices, which usually involve speaking for or with marginalized groups to powerful institutions. Advocacy is a continuum, with self-advocacy at one end. Much advocacy proceeds with varying degrees of input from, and accountability to, represented groups. The other end would be where NGOs (mis)represent communities, to which they have lost accountability through the process of NGOization, and speak for and over affected communities. Advocacy, as defined above, is, broadly speaking, part of activism.

Feminisms

The definition of "feminism/s" that I have used most often over the years comes from bell hooks (2000): "feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression" (p. 1). Feminist resistance manifests in many ways, including advocacy, activism, legal challenges, survival strategies, demonstrations, art, writing, NGOs, grassroots movements, and scholarship. I cite hooks' definition because it pays homage to the importance of movement-centered understandings of feminism and the central role Black feminist thought has played in North American efforts to continually re-engage feminism with movements. My understanding of feminisms is that they are first and foremost socio-political movements, and in my understanding feminist movements are also always a source of important conceptual tools and analyses. This interrelationship between the movement-aspect and the intellectual/theoretical project of feminism, especially how feminist thought (knowledge production) is cited/sited, will be explored throughout this dissertation.

Grassroots

"Grassroots" is used to refer to informally organized, on-the-ground forms of resistance. The term implies a likelihood of affected women and communities' participation and self-organizing. While the term may often be used in local contexts, organizations like Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) link grassroots groups transnationally (www.groots.org).

NGO

The acronym "NGO" refers to non-governmental organizations, many of which are research, advocacy, or service oriented. From my perspective, feminisms' institutionalization in NGOs is as significant and problematic an achievement as the academic institutionalization of feminism.

NGOization

"NGOization" is a critical and even pejorative term that refers to the institutionalization of informal, mass-based, and grassroots movements, a process in which more radical possibilities are often defused and more mainstream approaches co-opted. (Choudry, 2012; Desai & Walsh, 2010; Hudig & Dowley, 2010). Such processes typically link funding initiatives, donor priorities, and include the transfer of the labor of resistance into a remunerated professionalized job. Attendant shifts in accountabilities can de-radicalize or domesticate social movements. Nonetheless, some NGOs have deep ties to social movements and hold themselves accountable to movements. It is important to be aware and critical of the process of NGOization without dismissing the counter-hegemonic oppositional potential of some NGOs.

TANs

"Transnational Advocacy Networks" (TANs) are defined by Keck and Sikkink (1998) as: "relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services" (p.2). A fuller definition of TANs based on their analysis of tactics is: a group of people organized in flat network who promote a cause in domestic and international arenas by using: a) information politics, particularly framing; b) symbolic politics, c) leverage politics and/or d) accountability politics in order to change state and international organization (IO) behavior.

Transnational

The "transnational" designates, at the simplest level, the traversing of one or many national border/s. This can be deployed in a de-politicized language of seemingly neutral flows of ideas, people, and capital across borders, or from a more critical stance in which these flows are understood or mapped in terms of the underlying power relations that enable them and the often-exploitative effects they produce. The transnational is also a scale. The transnational can take a "global" focus, implying or assuming all regions of the world are potentially involved. It can also take a regional focus, such as in women's or feminist organizing that transpires in Latin America or Africa; or it may take a sub-regional focus such as seen in for example, Southeast Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa. Other times, rather than geographical proximity, it is the issues being addressed which determine the relevancy of participation in transnational forms of organizing. That is, differently located women work together on common issues which have distinct local manifestations, yet have been mapped through their analyses as being connected transnationally through specific oppressive structures or systems.

Transnational Feminisms (TF)

"Transnational feminisms" is a term used to refer to: a) a conceptual/theoretical framework developed primarily through North American feminist scholarship, b) cross-border activist networks of women and feminists, and c) an emerging field of studies in North American universities.

Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA)

"Transnational feminist activisms" is an umbrella term for feminist activist alliances that cross-borders. I employ a broad and heterogeneous understanding of the forms that TFA takes in this dissertation. These include TF NGOs, INGOs, TANs, transnational catalyst organizations, formal and informal networks, campaigns, conferences, forums, events, and information exchanges, or popular, mass-based, grassroots, and radical movements. The common elements of working across national boundaries for social change from a feminist perspective are what draw these disparate, differently aligned forms of organizing into this conceptual category.

Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledges (TFAK)

"Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledges" (TFAK) is the term used in this dissertation to highlight the knowledge/practices of TFA, including but not limited to: informal learning, nonformal learning, activist research, activist theory, activist pedagogies, intellectual labor, and knowledges produced.

Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS)

"Transnational Feminist Studies" (TFS) is the term used to denote an emerging interdisciplinary field of scholarship often related to North American Women's and Gender Studies. TFS might be defined by: a) a critical TF conceptual framework that grew out of postcolonial feminist studies. This framework is often applied to analyze a wide array of phenomena, and is especially sensitive to intersectional and anti-oppressive analyses of power; b) a wide array of objects of analysis, only sometimes explicitly including TFA. In my preferred construction of the field, I would include a broader array of scholarship that uses the international feminisms (IF) and global feminisms (GF) frames, those these are not necessarily aligned with the critical TF framework. For variety, and to acknowledge the contested nature of TFS as a field, I will also use the term transnational feminist scholarship.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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The "s" at the end of feminism*s* signals the urgent unpacking, de-homogenizing, and pluralizing of feminist knowledge*s*. Yet, the dubious grammaticality of that awkward "s" jars me. That is why I continue to use it. The awkward "s" serves as shorthand to make political, ethical, and epistemological points. Or does it? The "s" that was meant to widen our scope can be familiarized, encouraging a perfunctory nod to "diversity" that occludes the very distinctions and power relations that it was meant to highlight. In an on-going process of marginalizing and recentering, certain feminisms and certain activisms gain ascendancy within North American feminist scholarship. For transnational feminism*s*, the risk of sedimentation now tips the balance.

One of the ways in which knowledge and power struggles manifest in North American academic transnational feminist discourse is the appending of that pesky, convenient "s" to "transnational feminism." There are many transnational feminism*s*, some overtly complicit with neoliberal, imperialist, and colonialist forces, others more inadvertently so. Yet, still others are oppositional, critical, and seek concerted, collective, meaningful change. Transnational feminist thought emerges from scholarly and activist struggles in various sites all over the world. As the paradigm of transnationalism settles into North American (NA) academia, critical feminist scholars and activists have battles to wage both for and against the disciplinary effects of transnationalizing North American Women's and Gender Studies (NAWGS). And so, again, the unpacking begins.

I begin this dissertation from a reasoned assumption that "transnational feminisms" are diversely sited, have varied meanings, and multiple epistemologies. There are many possible entry points into transnational feminisms; I took two divergent paths and this dissertation is an effort to make sense of the space between them.

1. Multiple Entry Points to Transnational Feminisms

1.1 A First Entry Point to Transnational Feminisms: Women's Human Rights Networks in Japan and Asia

My initial entry point into transnational feminisms (TF) – understood as cross-border alliances between feminist/women's activist groups – was through working on organizing committees for Asian women's human rights conferences based in Japan, where I lived during the 1990s. It was an entry point into transnational feminist *activisms* (TFA). At the time, terms such as *josei kaihoh* (women's liberation) *feminizumu* (feminism), *kokka wo koeru feminizumu* (transnational feminisms), *kokusaiteki feminizumu* (international feminism), *inta-nashanaru feminizumu* (international feminism), and *gurobaru feminizumu* (global feminism) were used almost interchangeably by Japanese-speaking activists.[1]

The 1990s were a watershed moment for transnationally active women's networks, a time when they had collectively learned to organize alongside United Nations (UN) conferences in satellite NGO Forums and, sometimes, to effectively intervene in those conferences. The full force of neoliberalism had not yet been felt and some of the harsher lessons about the limits of institutionalizing change had not been learned. It was a hopeful time. Since the initial encounter of grassroots women's groups and NGOs at the satellite "Tribune" of the United Nations (UN) First World Conference on Women, held in Mexico City in 1975, transnational debates and alliances between differently-situated women had developed into a loosely connected set of networks around the world over the next two decades. Due to broad scale international mobilization by women's groups to have gender-specific violations of human rights acknowledged by the UN at the 1993 World Conference of Human Rights in Vienna, a number of fact-finding and testimony-gathering initiatives, as well as people's tribunals, were launched

in preparation. Furthermore, the NGO Forum at Huairou, which was to precede the 1995 UN 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, gave added impetus for renewed, intensified transnational networking by women's groups around the world. The UN often employs a regional focus for its work. As some of the problems women were addressing also fell along regional lines, many transnational women's activist groups also organize at the regional level. I became involved with Asian women's human rights networks in preparation for the Vienna and Huairou, while living and working in Tokyo and Yokohama.

For Japan, the years leading up to the 4th World Conference on Women 1995, which was also the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, coincided with an (unsuccessful) bid for a seat on the UN Security Council. It was a time of forced reckoning with the devastating legacies of Japan's colonial past in Asia. The main issues that Japan-based feminists tackled together with other Asian women included gendered dimensions of patriarchy, racism, imperialism, and transnational capitalism, such as: "comfort women" redress, sex trafficking, the presence of US military bases in Asia, Japanese development funding, and corporate practices abroad. Internal pressure from women in Japan, who were deemed the conscience of their nation by some Asian women's groups, coalesced with campaigns in formerly colonized countries to force Japan to take accountability for its imperialist war-time atrocities, particularly those that had only recently come to light, such as the "comfort women" system of forced prostitution for the Japanese army. Women in Japan theorized the similarities between wartime atrocities and ongoing economic and sexual exploitation in Asia. (See publications from the Asian Women's Asian and the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center in Tokyo at http://www.ajwrc.org/eng/).

1.1.1 Experiential and informal learning through transnational feminist activist knowledge practices. It was in the context of working with multilingual, Asia-regional women's human rights networks that I learned – experientially and informally – some important lessons about how feminism functions transnationally. My first-hand observation of the central role of transnational feminist activists' own experiential learning and their movement-based knowledge practices left an indelible impression. These multilingual, diverse, oppositional activist knowledges were a dynamic source of counter-hegemonic thought and resistance, often produced through praxis, and were theoretically and politically compelling. This local and transnational feminist thought was innovative, yet also vulnerable to newly emerging hegemonies, such as women's human rights discourse and neoliberalism. I believe that these activist-produced knowledges and their epistemologies warrant more serious recognition of and on their own terms.

Questions of power, solidarity, praxis, language, and the pedagogical dimensions of transnational feminist organizing were central preoccupations for me during this period. Tremendous learning and unlearning transpired through the daily work of activism, sometimes consciously and at other times as if by osmosis (see Lunny, 2006). I was inspired and sometimes frustrated by the ways in which activists were working out – through their practices, analyses, and dialogues – many of the questions posed in North American feminist classrooms about solidarity between women who were situated in very different contexts. The many transnational linkages that Asian feminist activists had forged introduced me to insurgent knowledges grounded in different contexts of struggle that surpassed anything I had encountered previously in my formal feminist undergraduate university-based education in Montreal (1986-89) or Chicago (1990-1). I witnessed the power struggles between more liberal and radical elements

within these broader networks, in/sensitivity to questions of class, and the predicament of racialized and sexual minority women that co-existed within these broader networks.

In the early 1990s, having just completed a master's degree in Japanese literature and a year of advanced Japanese language training in Yokohama, I worked as a volunteer translator, interpreter, "re-writer," and organizing committee member for a number of women's groups in Japan. I was also employed by a women's non-profit organization (NPO).[2] At this organization, I was hired to organize a collection of hundreds of newsletters from grassroots women's groups from all over the world. Academic training in East Asian Studies and Women's Studies had not prepare me for the breadth and depth of the analyses and perspectives I would be exposed to as I wrote organizational bios and feminist newsletter synopses to be translated into Japanese. Translation was necessary to make the primarily English language international material more accessible to Japanese readers. As I wrote summaries of foreign feminist newsletters written for international exchange with other women's groups, I learned by osmosis about and from various feminisms and women's advocacy groups from all over the world.[3] These pre-Internet era newsletters were the main means that far-flung women's groups used to keep in touch and to draw inspiration, critical insights, and support from each other's struggles. These grassroots, NGO, and NPO newsletters are examples of what I refer to as "activist texts." They were used to exchange ideas across cultural, national, and linguistic borders, and they contained texts and images that communicated local and transnational feminist thought. Working with these texts shifted my North American-, academic-, and Anglo-centric understanding of where and how feminist thought developed.

Immersion in these transnational feminist activist networks and texts equipped me to question Western academic knowledge production on what came to be called "transnational

feminisms" in the North American academy. I explain this at length because I believe that the different epistemological routes walked by academics and activists matter. Many of the grassroots and NGO newsletters exchanged by post in the 1980s and 1990s are sources that are uncitable without funds for travel and difficult archival research.[4] The feminist knowledges that I encountered through these newsletters profoundly shaped my understanding of power relations, knowledge production in grassroots contexts, and how those power/knowledge dynamics play out within transnational networking efforts. Yet, I rarely saw such knowledges engaged as knowledges in the TFS literature. Nor were the issues TFA were grappling with necessarily a primary concern in the Anglo-American TF literature.

All of the activist work that I did in the 1990s involved some element of linguistic and/or cultural translation between Japanese and English. My insight into the role of English as a global language -- of both colonization and resistance -- emerged from my particular positioning vis-à-vis Japan-based nodes of Asian transnational feminist networks. In 1993, I was recruited as a "feminist English teacher" by Japanese and Korean-resident activists who wanted to learn the English they needed to understand UN and NGO processes and documents, to appropriate feminist and human rights discourses, and to plan interventions into the power dynamics between English-speaking and non-English-speaking women at Asia regional NGO forums. My students were first or second time conference-going women, who spoke some English. Most wanted to polish presentations that they planned to give at the NGO Forum; some hoped to quickly improve their language skills so that they could also take part in more informal conversations related to their work. In order for the non-English-speaking or -reading activists to be involved in transnational exchanges, interpretation was sometimes provided, and key documents such as the *Beijing Platform for Action* were translated into Japanese by a group of volunteers.

One of the main lessons that I learned through my work as an activist at this time was that translation and interpretation play an important pedagogical and epistemological role in the development of the transnational feminist activist thought and women's human rights discourses and practices. Questions of knowledge and power come to the fore when translation is undertaken with awareness of colonial, gendered, and racialized histories. My understanding of TF was shaped by such engagements. This crucial yet burdened mode of transnational knowledge production and dissemination has hardly been explored within North American transnational feminist scholarship, and certainly less so in terms of linguistic imperialism and the fraught role of English as a common language of transnational struggle.[5] I was, unbeknownst to me at the time, acquiring a tacit, bilingual TFA knowledge base that would equip me to recognize some jarring absences upon my second encounter with TF as TFS in graduate school.

These experiential, uncitable sources of tacit knowledge shape my approach to the academic literature on transnational feminisms. The TFA that I witnessed, however innovative and inspiring, was also fraught with micro-political power struggles between politically aligned but differently situated and committed women. These divisions were visible through the lens of intersectionality, a tool that I had first learned from North American feminist texts and courses. I could see that within the Japan-based organizing that there were racialized, colonialist, and heterosexist tensions. For example, Ethnic Koreans living in Japan (*zainichi kankokujin* or *zainichi*) were active in this transnational work. *Zainichi* feminists were doubly tasked with making the racism of Japanese feminist discourse visible to Japanese women, and keeping the specificity of their antiracist and anti-colonialist insights from being overwritten as women's activism moved out of the Japanese context into the transnational sphere. Thus, at Huairou, for example, both *zainichi* and Japanese groups held workshops on the "comfort women" issue, with

different degrees of anti-racist analysis woven into the anti-colonial critiques presented. I learned from working with these groups and translating for them, of the slippery road anti-racist thought travels from local and national contexts to the international feminist arena. I learned not to assume that the lack of a strong anti-racist element in the analysis presented by majority women at an international conference meant that these struggles were not playing out locally or nationally. I saw clearly the impact of minoritized women attending international gatherings and speaking for themselves. I saw how such discrepancies in representation abroad were followed up and challenged at home, after international events. This taught me to recognize absences for possible power struggles. When I encountered the flattening of anti-racist and anti-colonialist elements of activist knowledges in dismissive critiques of global feminisms in transnational feminist scholarship, I was suspicious.

English linguistic imperialism and class were fraught questions for me, personally, and topics of on-going dialogue with other activists. Some non-English-speaking Japanese activists were resentful of the strong push towards transnational linkages, remaining more concerned with action at home. Given my experience of the central role that interpretation/translation plays in multilingual TFA networks, the lack of any extended discussion of translation and English linguistic and cultural imperialism in the North American Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS) literature was and is quite astounding to me.[6] Transnational organizing relies upon a tremendous amount of invisible labor, only some of it having to do with translating, interpreting, or learning a dominant language such as English. There is much intellectual labor embedded in advocacy and activist work. The un(der)acknowledged role of class in terms of structuring and facilitating certain transnational collaborations also troubled me, then, as an activist, and later, as a graduate student encountering anew transnational feminisms through the North American academic

literature, and noting the paucity of acknowledgement of TFA intellectual work—in both sense of the term.

What I saw and experienced while working in TFA clearly demonstrates that activists are engaged in intellectual work, as well as political and social action. While I emphasize the insightful political and intellectual work of Asian women's human rights activists, I do not want to romanticize it. My point here is less about the quality or practices of solidarity, and more about *how* actually activism and activist thought proceed to the transnational level through familiar everyday knowledge and learning practices, including translation, interpretation, and language learning. These are important knowledge practices of TFA epistemologies. Activists regularly describe their situations, analyze the contributing factors, and plan what they can do about it. This is what Rosemarie Tong (1988), author of a popular textbook on feminist theory says that theory looks like: description, explanation, and prescription. Women's human rights activist Charlotte Bunch long ago concurred with the first two elements of theory – description and analysis – but given her activist-leanings specifies the elements of vision and strategies rather than conflating them into the term "prescription" (2010, p. 13). In describing and analyzing their situations, feminist activists conduct research: archival, interview-based, and through dialogue with other activists, affected populations, and gatekeepers. And finally, activists teach and un/learn as they do their daily work. In my experience, all three of these modes of knowledge production – theory, research, and pedagogy – and their attendant learning, are as central to activist knowledge production as they are to academic knowledge production, albeit they unfold more loosely in movement contexts.

In my early encounters with North American TF scholarship, I did not find an explicit acknowledgement of the intellectual labor embedded in TFA. Fortunately, exposure to Asian

transnational women's networks has oriented me towards movement knowledges such that they cannot easily be overwritten by academic or theoretical texts. One of the concerns that motivates my research is that, had I not walked this first path though TFA, I could not have come to understand the richness of these TFA knowledges through my second encounter with transnational feminisms: through North American Anglophone scholarship.

1.2 A Second Entry Point to Transnational Feminisms: Graduate Studies in Quebec, Canada

My second entry point to transnational feminisms – here transnational feminist scholarship (TFS) – was through interdisciplinary graduate studies in Montréal, beginning in 2004. I entered Concordia University after twelve years in Japan. I was enthusiastic about documenting the "activist pedagogies" of transnational feminist groups and theorizing "the pedagogical nature of TFA."[7] I hoped that my doctoral studies would provide an opportunity to distill the insights made during those years of TFA, to conduct fieldwork documenting the rich knowledges generated in specific transnational activist alliances, and to bring them into dialogue with the conversations happening in the North American academy. Some of the major preoccupations in the North American academy at this time included, for scholars, the development of critiques of neoliberalism and globalization, and for administrators, efforts to promote interdisciplinarity and the "globalizing" of higher education. In other words, the paradigm of transnationalism was certainly on the horizon beyond Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) when I embarked upon graduate studies.

At that time there was confusion about the use of the term transnational feminisms, as opposed to similar terms such as international feminisms, feminist internationalism, international women's movement/s, and global feminisms. My early encounters with North American

transnational feminist discourse were in women's studies classrooms, where I audited and taught undergraduate classes to familiarize myself with feminist discussion taking place in Québec and Canada. I also attended a few conference sessions on transnational feminisms, which was a theme of the Canadian Women's Studies Association conferences for a few years from 2008 onwards. My impression at that time -- that the term transnational feminisms was deployed haphazardly -- was acknowledged in the scholarship (see Mendoza 2002). The differences between what was referred to as transnational feminisms in these discussions – uncritical study-abroad experiences that focused on "helping" poor Southern women; a blanket term for "third world feminism;" a knee-jerk critique of all cross-border alliances as necessarily imperialist, or necessarily involving the West – made dialogue difficult.

Experiential learning from my first exposure to transnational feminisms (as TFA) guided my second encounter with transnational feminisms in Anglo-American academic literature.[8] In my reading of the scholarship, there are three predominant meanings of transnational feminisms. The first refers to "transnational feminisms" as *a conceptual or theoretical framework* developed primarily by antiracist, postcolonial, and often diasporic feminist theorists working in the North American Anglophone academy. This critical, intersectional framework is, in my view, usually used to study power relations, and specifically inequitable relations of power between differently located women. Foremost postcolonial feminist scholars Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal (2000) refer to the object of transnational feminist studies as "practices," yet in the broader literature the object of analysis could just as easily be literary or visual texts, international relations, or cross-border flows of information, capital, and/or people. TFA is not necessarily addressed in TF as a critical framework. Ashwini Tambe (2010) who works on transnational feminist theory, political economy, and sexuality, largely in South Asian contexts, refers to

Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS) as *an emerging field of study*. This is the second common meaning of transnational feminisms found in the North American scholarship. The third usage of TF in the scholarship refers to TF as a form of cross-border organizing, which for the sake of clarity I will consistently refer to herein as transnational feminist activisms (TFA). This activisms-centered understanding of the term TF was the one with which I was most familiar. To my mind, it decentered Western, Northern, Anglophone, and academic claims to feminism in favour of a more grassroots, social movement, activism and advocacy oriented understanding of feminism.

From this point forward in this dissertation, I will refer to the broadest range of North American transnational feminist scholarship as Transnational Feminist Scholarship/Studies (TFS). The use of this term is not to suggest that this body of literature is best interpreted as an emerging field (or sub-field), rather than as a feminist theoretical/conceptual framework. Rather, my usage of the term TFS is a way to loosely draw together Anglo-American academic literature that a) uses a postcolonial, antiracist, transnational feminist theoretical/conceptual framework, and/or b) empirically studies the on-the-ground practices of transnational feminist activisms (TFA) sometimes also referred to as global/international feminisms. My own interest is primarily in the overlay between these two streams.

I was troubled by the uneven presence of TFA within the academic TF literature emerging around this time. The foundational texts (reviewed in chapter 5) had certainly envisioned transnational conversations, including with activists, as generative of important insights. It was not simply the case that TFA was entirely absent in the emerging TFS. It wasn't. Post "Under western eyes" (Mohanty, 1984) there was some success in bringing Southern feminist *activist* perspectives into dialogue with North American academic feminist discourse;

Alexander & Mohanty's *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (1997) is exemplary in this regard, with contributions from non-US-based activists as well as academics.

Other early, foundational TF scholarship seemed to simultaneously credit the importance of transnational collaboration with activists in various locations around the world, but not actually enact such dialogue, preferring to engage or anthologize North American university based scholars (see for example Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Mohanty, Russo & Torres, 1991). These path breaking anthologies were urgently needed and introduced case studies of feminism, feminist texts, and issues from other regions of the world; they also did the crucial work of creating a space for US-based women scholars of colour and diasporic backgrounds to theorize feminism as multi-sited, indigenous to many locations, and intersectional. The perspectives of these critical academics are not simply transparent windows into non-US-based activist perspectives however. In 1994, one year after the UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna, *Scattered Hegemonies* was published by Grewal and Kaplan. In the introduction they state:

> Without an analysis of transnational scattered hegemonies that reveal themselves in gendered relations, feminist movements will remain isolated and prone to reproducing the universalizing gestures of dominant Western cultures. Notions such as 'global feminism' have failed to respond to such needs … Conventionally, 'global feminism' has elided the diversity of women's agency in favour of a universalized Western model of women's liberation that celebrates individuality and modernity…Many women both within and outside the United States …have defined their feminism through class or race or other ethnic, religious or regional struggles. Yet we know that there is an imperative need to address the concerns of women around the world in the historicized particularity

> of their relationship to multiple patriarchies as well as to international economic hierarchies. (1994, p. 17)

Grewal and Kaplan are critical of unifying projects especially those that privilege sexism at the expense of other systems of oppression, and rightly suspicious of Western feminisms' hegemonising power. However, they continue on to make suggestions for feminist practices that were already underway, often under the women's human rights/global feminism mantle. (This slippage between Western discourses or "notions" of global feminism and on-the-ground global feminist activisms will be unpacked in chapter 5). As Reilly writes of the pre-internet and email women's human rights petition that changed UN interpretations of human rights to include gendered forms of violence: "By the time the [1993] Vienna conference arrived, 1,000 sponsoring groups across every region of the world had gathered almost a half-million signatures in 124 countries" (Reilly, 2009).) It would be impossible to argue that these efforts, which were tied to local tribunals at which local forms of women's human rights violations were documented, were inattentive to other forms of oppression, despite the emphasis on the gendered nature of the violations. Global feminism cannot sweepingly be charged with suppressing women's agency and analysis, isolating feminist movements, and simply reproducing Western dominance, if one considers the activist work and texts produced in this struggle, however fraught and problematic the human rights frame is.[9]

At best there seemed to be intermittent attention to the methodological principle of grounding TFS in some degree of direct dialogue with, or accountability to, TF activists and to the potential of learning from TFA epistemologies. TFA was oddly missing from TFS, in a way that was hard to articulate. I chose this tension as an entry point to research.

2. From Disjuncture to Research Problem

The disjuncture between the vibrancy of on-the-ground of transnational feminist activisms and the alternately dismissive, romanticized, and idiosyncratic discussions of international/global/transnational feminisms in the North American academic milieu when I began my graduate studies, was perplexing to me. Institutional ethnographers use such disjunctures as entry points into research, not to explore the experience of disjuncture itself, but rather to explicate how that experience is socially and conceptually organized. This perceived disjuncture between TFA and TFS became my point of entry into research and informed my research question, which asks: "how is "transnational feminisms" socially and conceptually organized?" In other words, I ask: how are the knowledges that comprise "transnational feminisms" produced, structured, and disseminated, particularly at key moments of the emergence of "transnational feminisms" in the Anglo-American scholarship? My dissertation provides a textual analysis of TF academic literature as one way to understand the gap between TFA and TFS.

The broad aim of my research project is to make sense of the distance between TFA and TFS, which involves some degree of dialogue across academic/activist divides. I also frame this project as making the case for an interdisciplinary dialogue between TFS and SML. Admittedly, an SML-inflected empirical study of TFA was my first choice. However, given the status of case studies in TFS, and the slowly growing literature that did address TFA specifically from a TF framework, I wasn't convinced that even a very well executed empirical study of transnational feminist social movement learning could address what I began to see as the forces shaping the trajectory of the academic discourse of TF, in a way that sporadically invoked TFA yet seemingly occluded the intellectual innovations of TFA. And so, the research process lead me

towards an unexpected turn, back towards the academic literature, away from fieldwork, and in search of new reading strategies and citational praxis.

In North America, social movement engagement had been a central epistemological and accountability strategy employed as the field of WGS developed. How, I wondered, had the North American academic discussion of TF developed with so little input from transnational feminist activists? Given the increased availability of web-based sources, was it not likely that the main modes of academic feminist knowledge production – pedagogy, research, and theorizing – would have involved more interaction with transnational activists and/or their texts? It is not outlandish to think that feminist scholars would seek out women long engaged in feminist organizing across national contexts as a central strategy in developing their understandings of transnational feminisms.

Some foundational transnational feminist [10] texts did seek to bring to the North American Anglophone reader the insights of feminist thought from different locations, usually in nationally framed case studies or essays (see Grewal & Kaplan, 1994; Alexander & Mohanty 1994; Mohanty, Russo & Torres, 1991). A number of anthologies compiled case studies of local and national women's movements from around the world, though not usually with a focus on transnational dimensions, and often framed in terms of local feminisms or specific responses to globalization (Basu, 1995; Naples & Desai, 2002). These volumes helped North American Anglophone readers to understand some of the issues women "elsewhere" were grappling with and served to remind Northern feminists about Southern feminist agency, particularly vis-à-vis anti-globalization and United Nations centered liberal and human rights advocacy. As I will argue elsewhere in this dissertation, case studies, though rich and offering some of the most grounded engagement with and insights into activist practices, are rarely integrated into broader

theoretical frameworks of TFS. Though certainly scholarship on "activisms elsewhere" was published, it would be difficult to argue, that TF emerged from on-going direct dialogue with transnational feminist activists or their knowledge practices.

I suspected that my discomfort with the North American deployment of the term transnational feminisms is the result of having initially travelled a different epistemological route through transnational feminist activisms: one which centered the intellectual and political work of Asian women activists. Yet, even allowing for the specificities of my own first encounter with transnational feminism something seemed amiss within Anglo-American TF scholarly discourse. In my readings, TF scholarship too often centered the North American-based feminist scholar as a "transnational feminist." As I will argue later in chapter 5, I believe that this scholarship relies too heavily upon the theoretical frameworks advanced by leading NA-based scholars (what I call "citational theorizing") at the expense of empirical study of existing transnational feminist activist exchanges.[11] The accomplishments of transnational feminist activist work on-the-ground seemed to be occluded by scholarship. It was through my dissertation research that I began to understand how TFA thought had been in a sense overwritten by critique or submerged under disciplinary foci (what I call "citational disciplining").

This situation was troubling and visible to me because, in my own encounter with collective efforts to think through and against transnational systems of capitalist, imperialist, racist, and sexist oppression and abusive practices, Asian women activists and scholars were at the forefront of naming, documenting, and resisting those complex, intertwined webs of psychic, emotional, physical, and economic violence. Within the emerging North American feminist literature on transnational feminisms, however, movement insights seemed confined to case studies. While my first encounter with transnational feminist activisms had been exciting and

inspiring, my second encounter was disorienting, both literally and figuratively. I wondered: could the vibrancy, heterogeneity, and even the missteps of TFA redirect North American feminist scholarship?

A problem lay before me. How to name and attend to the absence that I felt in the literature, given the dismissive stance of many scholars to tacit knowledge? Could I make my experientially gained informal learning and familiarity with a particular set of TFA practices a legitimate knowledge base within a dissertation? At this point I was fortunate enough to encounter a nascent body of interdisciplinary scholarship on Social Movement Learning (SML). SML's emphasis on "informal learning" offered some theoretical grounding for what I had been calling "the pedagogy of activism," and the case studies exemplified the complicated contradictory ways in which learning unfolds through resistance (see Foley, 1999; Choudry & Kapoor, 2010). While the paucity of a TFA-centered emphasis within TFS still puzzled me, I was relieved to have a body of academic literature to refer to, and against which to test out my own everyday theorizing about TFA. As I could not find any case studies of TFA from a SML perspective, initially the idea of combining these two emerging frameworks was an exciting prospect. Though my project is not an ethnography and my research focus has shifted away from fieldwork documenting the pedagogies and epistemologies at play in TFA milieu, my exposure to SML literature and TFA movement knowledges informs my interrogation of academic invocation of TF throughout this dissertation. My own different encounters with TF provided opportunities to work, think, learn, and unlearn, under very different circumstances. Transforming this rarely recognized on-going "disconnect" between TFA and TFS into a productive tension between differently-sited/-cited knowledge practices thus animates my dissertation.

Readers familiar with the on-the-ground/on-the-web realities of TFA, movement-based epistemological practices, *and* TFS will likely understand the distance between these modes of transnational feminisms. The difficulty of finding compelling ways to alerting an academic readership to a rarely recognized oversight will no doubt resonate with many scholars grounded in activist communities. It is hard to prove an absence, and pursuing that particular challenge as the central question of my dissertation would have lead me in a different direction, methodologically. My dissertation is not a study of activist texts that evidence certain epistemologies. I am already aware of and convinced of the important intellectual work done in transnational feminist activist milieu. What I wanted to understand was "how actually" the transnational feminisms frame emerged within Anglo-American feminist scholarship in such a way as to de-center movement-based TF thought. That said, I am mindful of what a skeptical reader might think. I will address here, briefly, the question of evidence that such a gap between the TFA and TFS does indeed exist, though my point in this dissertation is not primarily to document this gap.

This gap between TFA and TFS might not be immediately visible to a scholar whose main encounter with TF thought is through the North American Anglophone transnational feminist scholarship, particularly if that engagement has bypassed works done under the framework of international and global feminisms, in favor of the post-colonial lineage of TFS. Lest the existing case studies of TFA seem to be sufficient to claim that TFS is duly engaged with the diversity and uniqueness of TFA thought, I will offer here one example of the kind of oversight or overwriting that I believe testifies to the gap that I am addressing. This example is offered as an invitation to consider the implications of how TFA thought has -- or has not -- been engaged as "transnational feminisms" emerged in the North American academy.

Below I will present a close reading of a 1977 activist text produced by Japanese and zainichi women in response to the critique they heard from other Asian women around women's struggle, especially as mothers, against poverty, colonialism and capitalism at the United Nations International Women's Year (1975) conference in Mexico City. I present it as an early example of the kind of activist text and activist knowledge that are often absent in TFS. This implies a lack of curiosity about different epistemological routes through similar struggles, and activist texts, especially those that are only intermittently available in English. In my reading, such examples of TFA thought have not been drawn into conversation with the central theoretical debates of TF, even though academic and movement-based thinkers grapple with similar questions. This movement text shows that women activists in Japan in 1977 were struggling *in Japanese* to think through *(theorize)* their complicated positionality as oppressed women complicit with state capital and imperialism. The knowledge practices used included *translating their ideas into English* to continue dialogue on these issues with other Asian women, *from whom they were learning* and with whom they wished to *act in solidarity*. I use the English translation of this text here to highlight an example of movement-based TF epistemology. A close reading of this short "declaration" shows how transnational feminist learning and knowledge developed through transnational dialogues between Asian women, often through translation into English, from at least 1975 onwards.

The Asian Women's Association published their declaration when the group was founded in Japan by Japanese and *zainichi* feminists on March 1, 1977 to commemorating a date "when Korean women risked their lives for national independence from Japanese colonial rule."[12] In their founding declaration they discuss how, post-Meiji Restoration (1868), Japan's modernization was "inseparably linked to aggression towards other Asian Countries [sic]" and

how Japanese women were forced to serve the interests of the patriarchal state, imperialism, and capitalism.

The founders of AWA state that they, like previous generations of women, are denied independence due to their gender: "we are still being oppressed and discriminated against simply because we are women" and "forced to cooperate with Japan's economic aggression in the Asian countries." While women's oppression is depressingly consistent over time, they note what is new in that particular historical moment: for other Asian women the struggles for the liberation of women and their people/nations are now inextricably linked. This leadership of Asian women in thinking through and resisting these related struggles is a factor that AWA takes as inspiration.

The AWA declaration paraphrases (or informally cites) the argument of Third World women, heard at Mexico City: "the most oppressed women are mothers unable to provide, food, education, and medical care for their children."[13] Japanese women, according to the AWA statement, are accountable for these problems because "the responsibility for the turmoil and hunger lies within the highly industrialized countries, including Japan, and the multinational corporations that are attempting to monopolize world markets." In their effort to extricate themselves from colonial complicity, women in Japan acknowledge previous male aggression in Asia, and say "now we must refuse to allow our men to be sent to these countries […] whether as economic invaders or for sexual exploitation." Women's liberation depends upon their ability to simultaneously play this anti-colonial, anti-capitalist role without which "we ourselves will never become liberated persons." AWA acknowledges Japanese women's culpability in the oppression of Asian nations and Asian women in particular. This early feminist group asserts a desire for solidarity, and stresses that women in Japan should cull insights from the intertwined resistance

of women in Asia: “We want to express our sincere apologies to our Asian sisters. We want to learn from and join in their struggles.”

The AWA text does not use the word intersectionality or the term interlocking oppressions, yet, clearly the authors are overtly grappling with the interwoven nature of imperialism, patriarchy, and capitalism, as well as moving towards an analysis of racism. The AWA declaration addresses transnational forms of oppression and credits a transnational flow of resistance by Asian women. This activist text implies that women in Japan were struggling with the vexing contradictions of experiencing discrimination, oppression, privilege, and complicity, in other words, they were interrogating their positionality vis-à-vis Asia/n women. AWA also credits women’s struggles in Asia as producing the insights from which women in Japan need to learn, emphasizing the importance of transnational dialogues and solidarity with other women across social location. I recognize this generalized form of crediting Asian women’s thought encountered at international gatherings as an informal citational practice of transnational feminist activist epistemologies.

The AWA declaration was written in 1977. That is the same year as the publication of the Combahee River Collective statement, a seminal anti-racist, feminist activist text that informed subsequent North American academic feminist anti-racist thought. The AWA Declaration was written a year before North American feminists heralded the publication of Mary Daly’s *Gyn/Ecology* (1978). Daly theorized women’s oppression across cultures through a (North American white) radical feminist lense. Her misrepresentation of other women’s struggles, her collapse of historical and contemporary forms of oppression such as in China, her race- and culture-blindness, and her gender-prioritizing analysis incited a strong anti-racist push-back within North American scholarship, sparked by Audre Lorde’s famous open letter to Daly

(1979). The AWA declaration was written seven years before Adrienne Rich's ground-breaking "Notes towards a politics of location" which questions the ethnocentrism of white positionality, and Western feminist discursive over-generalizations which overshadow many specific grounded struggles by "other" women (1984). We can see that this Asian activist text provides evidence of a mode of collective transnational feminist oppositional knowledge production, rooted in languages, cultures, and social movements largely outside of the North American academy's purview at the time. Yet, it grappled with questions that would soon be haunting North American feminism. It is for this reason that I believe that dialogue with, or at least consideration of, the transnational nature of learning and knowledge production by TF activists might have benefited the development of North America "transnational feminisms" thought, which began thereafter. It is an example of what I mean when I say that there is a gap between TFA and TFS and their epistemologies. If movement-based genealogies are a way towards acknowledging multiple epistemologies of transnational feminist thought, I would argue they will have to be conducted less as a search for particular key concepts (intersectionality, transnationalism) and more by tracing the kinds of questions women where asking, the kinds of knowledges they were producing, the struggles they were theorizing and fighting.[14]

I present this text as a small piece of evidence for the skeptical reader to consider. When Anglo-American scholarship progresses with scant attention to these differently sited knowledges, I understand this as a process, however unintentional, of overwriting of activist knowledges. I am not arguing that North American women of colour plagiarized this proto-intersectional Japanese and Korean women's thought. I am, however, flagging for the skeptical reader that women activists have been grappling with and theorizing multiple systems of

oppression, or producing knowledge in struggle for longer and in more places and languages than one might sense reading much North American transnational feminist scholarship.

It is the lack of sustained curiosity about different epistemologies of transnational feminist though, the dearth on an ongoing commitment to engaging with the ideas produced on the ground, in struggle, elsewhere, in different languages, by thinkers who might well have grappled differently and effectively with similar questions, that has lead to me to choose to explore the social and conceptual organization of this absence in TFS. I believe that TFS literature is missing something rich and complicated in TFA. Through the research process I have become better able to explain what some of those missing elements are.

My research addresses this uncomfortable fit between the transnational feminist activist epistemologies from which I learned so much while working with Asian women's human rights networks, and their sparse representations in the North American academic transnational feminist scholarship that I encountered in the early years of my doctoral studies.[15] My interdisciplinary dissertation also seeks to explore these questions in dialogue with research being done by SML scholars.

The problem addressed by this dissertation, then, is the disjuncture between understandings of transnational feminisms -- TFA and TFS -- and the different but intersecting knowledge practices to which they refer.[16] These different understandings of transnational feminisms are infused with the epistemological specificities of two different contexts of struggle: the shifting terrain of transnational activist milieu and the Anglo-American academy. I contend that these spheres produce their transnational feminist knowledges in particular ways, though there are commonalities as well. In this dissertation I highlight some of these epistemological

differences and demonstrate how they are often overlooked in transnational feminist scholarship, due in part, I will argue, to the dictates and effects of academic knowledge production practices.

The relevant body of literature that I examine is the North American English language academic scholarship on transnational feminisms and transnational feminist activisms published from the 1990s, but especially 2000 to the present. I have chosen to focus, in chapter 5 primarily, on literature from 2000 to 2010 when the TF frame was being differentiated from international feminist and global feminism, as well as to review early foundational texts from the 1980s and 1990s. Additionally, in chapter 6, I examine anthologies that were published in 2010 on transnational feminist activisms. I take their simultaneous appearance to confirm that TFA is clearly now on the radar of TFS. Yet, despite this fact, much scholarly TF discourse still seems to recenter North American positionalities.

While the "disconnect" between academic and activist transnational feminisms briefly introduced above is of personal interest to me, to claim that it is a problem which warrants a dissertation-length examination necessitates evidence that it is of wider concern or that it has been overlooked to the detriment of the development of critical feminist thought. It is only quite recently that the chasm between activist and academic genealogies of the transnational has been problematized by TF scholars. Alexander and Mohanty (2010) have reopened lines of interrogation that point the way towards a renewed interest in movement-based understandings and experiences of transnational feminisms. A 2011 special online issue of *Feminist Review* explored questions of feminist theory and activism from a global perspective. In 2012, during a talk at the Canadian Women's Studies Association (CWSA) Conference, Janet Conway, one of the only scholars working in Canada on transnational feminisms from what could be called a social movement learning perspective, acknowledged this disjuncture as a "misfit" between TFA

and TF scholarship. Both the chasm and strategies to "bridge" it are only very recently emerging on the radar of TF scholars.[17] The tension between transnational activisms and North American academic research and theory is, I believe, beginning to garner more attention, and scholars and activists can learn from these and other movement-relevant dialogues across movements and disciplines. I hope that this dissertation convinces the reader as to the detrimental effect of not recognizing the disjuncture between TFA and TFS.

My central task is to explore how transnational feminisms are socially and conceptually organized within North American university contexts. My inquiry unfolds through a series of interconnected questions that guide my research into the North American academic side of this phenomenon. I concur with Sears and Cairns' (2011) emphasis on the importance of "defamiliarization" to critical thought. This dissertation aims to defamiliarize, to encourage the scholarly reader to see anew the everyday academic knowledge practices that are taken-for-granted and to disquiet the obviousness of such practices. In so doing, I hope to more clearly expose the epistemological risks of recentering North American academic transnational feminisms and the cost of sidelining or instrumentalizing TFA and their knowledges.

3. Chapter Overview

In chapter 2, "Interdisciplinary Dialogues: A Comparative Analysis of Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS) And Social Movement Learning (SML)," I discuss the motivation for, and modes of, interdisciplinarity relevant to my project. I then offer a comparative analysis of TFS and SML. The chapter concludes with thoughts on the promise of a synthesis of TFS and SML for exploring the learning and knowledge production inherent in transnational feminist activisms. The questions addresses herein are: a) the hows and whys of interdisciplinarity, and

b) what do SML and TFS share and have to offer one another, especially in light of my argument around the gap between TFA and TFS?

In the third chapter, "Theorizing Transnational Feminist Activist Informal Learning and Social Movement Knowledges: A Synthesis of Experiential Learning and Social Movement Learning Perspectives" I begin with a discussion of my activist and researcher positionalities, highlight the ways in which tacit knowledge is produced through activist work, and then review the emergence of SML. In so doing I show how SML can help to validate experiential and tacit forms of activist knowledge, such as those I drew upon in identifying the disjuncture that acted as my entry point into this research. I introduce two key conceptual tools -- informal learning and movement knowledges -- from SML that can be used to highlight and theorize activists' experiential knowledge and social movement knowledges. The questions addressed in this chapter are: How are learning and knowledge practices embedded in TFA? How do the SML conceptual tools help make activists' tacit knowledge and epistemologies more visible within TFS? These questions are essential for later arguments that will differentiate transnational feminist *activisms* from transnational feminist activist *knowledges*. The discovery of this distinction is due to the use of these SML tools as well as an innovative methodological framework introduced in the next chapter.

The fourth chapter, "Methodology: The Case for Reading the Academic Transnational Feminist Scholarship as Data," introduces my blended methodological framework. I turn away from the interdisciplinary dialogue between TFS and SML (resumed in Chapter 7) and towards Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Political Activist Ethnography (PAE). Chapter 4 introduces four main methodological tenets drawn from IE and PAE. These are first discussed in terms of their original articulations by IE founder Dorothy Smith and PAE innovator George Smith, and

then in terms of my own unorthodox application and integration of these principles. It is in this chapter that the reader encounters the fuller argument justifying the central research question: "how are TF socially and conceptually organized?" I also address the vexing question of how to read TF scholarship differently. I show how textual analysis as understood within IE and PAE suggests ways to read academic literature as data that reveals something about its social and conceptual organization, rather than simply for the lines of argumentation presented therein. This distinction will be useful in the following two chapters which present textual analysis of some TFS for its orientations towards TF, TFA, and TFAK.

The data analysis begins in chapter 5, "A Textual Analysis of the Social and Conceptual Organization of Transnational Feminisms." This rather long chapter offers two short literature reviews and three pieces of textual analysis. The question animating this chapter is: "How was/is the emergence of 'TF' socially and conceptually organized?"[18] In other words, how are understandings of transnational feminisms and TFA (re)produced through academic knowledge practices?

The chapter begins with a literature review of interdisciplinary social science literature that theorizes the conditions that lead to the rise of TFA in recent decades: a "siting" of TFA, so to speak. Scholars presenting this socio-political and historical analysis might use the terms international feminisms (IF), global feminisms (GF), transnational advocacy networks (TANs), or TFA. Chapter 5 ends with a more conventional literature review of foundational post-colonial TF texts, a "citing" of the origins of TFS. The bulk of the chapter is IE/PAE/GT-inflected textual analysis of TF scholarship as data, which unfolds through the reading of clusters of texts engaged in different debates. It presents three pieces, if you will, of textual analysis.

The first piece of textual analysis examines the North American English language academic feminist texts on TF from about 2000-2010, especially those that use the key words "transnational feminisms" and, where possible, "activisms." I conclude that a definitional debate over the meaning of the term "transnational feminisms" is one central preoccupation of this literature. I find the three main understandings of TF found in the 2000-2010 literature: a) TF is a conceptual or theoretical framework; b) TF is an emerging sub-field of TFS; and c) TF refers, in a more empirical sense, to TFA, or women's and feminist cross-border organizing against oppression in multiple contexts. The second textual analysis asks: how do these definitions function to socially and conceptually organize orientations towards TFA? I show how such definitions influence scholarly stances to TFA, which might take TFA to be irrelevant/optional for TF as a framework/field scholarship, or might take TFA as a definitive object of analysis in research on TFA. The third piece of textual analysis examines the functions of social and conceptual organization inherent in academic knowledge practices through a focus on the tensions between competing terms – transnational feminisms, international feminisms, global feminisms. What does this differentiating project they tell us about the role of frame replacement in the development of the field of TFS in North America? I explain the links between the definitional projects, citational practices, the emergence of the TF frame, and various scholarly orientations to TFA.

My theorization of citational disciplining, citational theorizing, and how certain academic knowledge practices act as field-building mechanisms is woven through this chapter. I advance an argument about the limitations of conventional epistemological practices that favor grounding TF theoretical innovations by citing foundational English language texts by North American-

based scholars, at the expense of integrating activist thought. That gap between TFA and TFS begins to appear more visibly in this chapter.

In chapter 6, "A Textual Analysis of Orientations Towards Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledges (TFAK) in Recent Transnational Feminist Scholarship," I present an analysis of elements of some anthologies on TFA published in 2010. I take their publication as a moment when a clear focus on TFA has been established, somewhat differentiated from IF and GF, within TFS. The textual analysis proceeds from an initial exploration of the ways in which transnational feminist researchers approach transnational feminist *activisms* in chapter 5, to a narrower focus on how transnational feminist scholars orient towards transnational feminist activist *knowledges* (TFAK) in this chapter. This distinction is a key contribution of my research. I identify and discuss four approaches to activist knowledges and texts found within these texts. I present it as a typology of sorts, one that can help the reader to see how orientations to TFA and TFAK are organized within TFS. I argue that these particular epistemological practices have influenced scholarly orientations towards TFA and their knowledges as the academic literature on transnational feminisms develops. In an effort to defamiliarize academic knowledge production practices and highlight their impact on the ways in which TFA *and their knowledges* are taken up within feminist scholarship during this pivotal period, I identify some key academic knowledge practices. I address the question: how do everyday academic knowledge practices influence the uptake of TFA *knowledges*?

Having identified strengths and weaknesses in existing scholarly orientations to TFAK, I return to insights from SML and my own TFA experiential learning in chapter 7: "Making Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledges (TFAK) Visible: Integrating Social Movement Learning (SML) And Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS)." This chapter considers the

question: “How can transnational feminist informal learning and activist knowledges be made more visible in TFS?” I offer some examples of what an interdisciplinary TFS/SML methodology can accomplish. A shift in orientations towards activist learning and knowledges is suggested. I argue that scholars of TF can orient more directly towards the learning and knowledge production in TFA contexts by recognizing the differences between academic and activist epistemologies and knowledges. First, I discuss knowledge production processes in TFA milieu: specifically activist theory, activist research, and activist pedagogies. Second, I address ways to make TFA informal learning more visible in TFS, by consciously shifting scholarly orientations from learning *about* TFA to learning *in, from,* and *with* TFA.

Chapter 8, “Conclusion: Siting/Citing Transnational Feminist Activisms/Activist Knowledges (TFA/K) in Transnational Feminist Scholarship (TFS),” recaps my argument, highlights original contributions, acknowledges limitations of my study, and points the way toward future directions as a way to discuss the implications of my findings. The dissertation makes a number of original contributions. It is the first in-depth study to offer an examination of the potential for a synthesis of TFS and SML. The unorthodox use of an IE/PAE-inflected textual analysis methodology is a unique contribution. The data analysis (textual analysis) offers a unique insight into how scholarly orientations towards TFAK, rather than simply TFA, must be recognized if the gap between TFA and TFS intuited at the outset of this study is to become more visible to scholars. Other contributions include: a) the importance of recognizing and distinguishing the social and conceptual organization of TF scholarship; b) the importance of understanding the specificities of TFA epistemologies and knowledge practices and of engaging movement knowledges on a more equitable par as TFS develops; c) the function of citational disciplining and citational theorizing within TFS; d) how academic knowledge practices function

as field-building mechanisms during the emergence of the field of TFS; e) the importance of defamiliarizing everyday academic knowledge practices more generally; f) strategies to make visible and explicit the informal learning and knowledge production that are central to TFA, especially through an interdisciplinary synthesis of SML and TFS; g) the ways in which North American scholarly positionalities are surreptitiously recentered even in much TF scholarship on TFA; and h) the importance of self-reflexive scholarly citational praxis.

This dissertation takes a careful look at ethical and epistemological questions surrounding transnational feminisms. It creates dialogue across academic-activist and disciplinary divides, as it weaves together experiential, activist, social movement, academic and (inter)disciplinary knowledges. The knowledge bases of TFS, TFA, SML, and IE/PAE are engaged. I begin, in the next chapter, with a broad, comparative overview of the terrain of TFS and SML.

CHAPTER 2: INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST STUDIES (TFS) AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING (SML)

CHAPTER 2: INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST STUDIES (TFS) AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING (SML)

Interdisciplinarity has been a growing phenomenon in North American universities for the past few decades. While many scholars engage in project-specific interdisciplinary research, for scholars and students of women's and gender studies (WGS), interdisciplinarity characterizes their field. There are project-specific, field-broadening, and field-maintaining uses of interdisciplinarity. I limit my discussion in this chapter to the "hows and whys" of interdisciplinarity, to explain and justify the interdisciplinary framework for my project, specifically.[19] I then present a comparative analysis of TFS and SML as a preliminary exploration of the main interdisciplinary dialogue that I seek to begin, and mention other aspects of my project's interdisciplinarity in my conclusion.

1. Interdisciplinarity: "Hows" and "Whys"

The motivation for interdisciplinary doctoral research has been categorized as a) problem-driven, b) concerned with the development of existing or new (sub-) disciplines, and/or for c) advancing methodological innovation (Lyall et al., 2008, p. 1-2). This project, to different degrees, is undertaken with all three motivations. The original justification for pursuing my studies interdisciplinarily, rather than in Sociology, Adult Education or Women's Studies, is that the disjuncture which serves as my entry point, both to graduate school and this project, necessitates it. The interdisciplinarity of the problem that drives this project did not emerge originally from a sense of inadequacy with TFS or SML, or a hunch that they might somehow complete each other, but rather from the lack of a single discipline that provided the requisite conceptual landscape for exploring the inherently pedagogical and epistemological nature of transnational feminist activisms. Later as the research agenda developed I turned to institutional

ethnography and political activist ethnography for methodology, creating another interdisciplinary dimension to my project.

I began doctoral studies after many years away from academia, intending to do fieldwork that documented how transnational feminist activists in Asia were learning by osmosis as they innovated cross-border alliances against violence and militarism. At the time I was not up-to-date with developments in the field of North American Women's and Gender Studies, and had no formal training in the discipline of Education.[20]

When constructing the interdisciplinary scaffolding for my doctoral studies, I looked for fields that most closely matched the broad areas of my interest and settled upon International/Global/Transnational Feminisms (Women's Studies) as my major field. My minor fields are Social Justice Pedagogies (Education/Women's Studies), and what I initially called "Activist Pedagogies," a category I created from Education, Adult Education, Women's Studies, and other interdisciplinary materials. Later, when I encountered the term Social Movement Learning and its pertinent assemblage of literatures, I adopted that title for my third field. While the literature that I have consulted along the way includes a broad array of Social Sciences and Humanities scholarship, this project primarily seeks to bring into dialogue the disciplines of Women's Studies and Adult Education, or, more precisely, their two simultaneously emerging sub-fields, Transnational Feminisms and Social Movement Learning, respectively. Secondarily, it includes IE/PAE.

My doctoral studies initially required interdisciplinary conceptual tools that would deepen my understanding of the pedagogical nature of transnational feminist activisms. I initially asked questions of TFS from an activist dis/orientation upon encountering the North American literature as I hastily drafted my graduate school application, rather than developing such

questions citationally through familiarity with the emerging field's own preoccupations. If these questions inspired by activism sometimes dovetail with concerns emerging in the field, it is both because such questions are pertinent to transnational feminist struggles and analyses, and because a synthesis of perspectives on transnational feminisms was an inevitable part of familiarizing myself with the academic literature. Over the long, slow process of pursuing doctoral studies part-time, my project has shape-shifted into an effort to make sense of how transnational feminist activist and North American academic feminist epistemologies differs. While SML informs this research focus, methodologically IE/PAE impact how I read the literature, as will be explained in chapter 4.What remains as a problem seeking an interdisciplinary solution is the question of how to make activist learning and knowledge production more visible in North American transnational feminist scholarship.

Above, we saw that interdisciplinary research is not only problem-driven, but that it is also inspired by a desire to bring exiting fields/disciplines into dialogue, or to help develop a sub-discipline. Because very little work has been done at the intersection of TFS and SML, there is no pre-existing interdisciplinary body of literature calling for a sub-field of studies that focused upon transnational feminists' informal activist learning and/or movement knowledge production practices.[21] While I believe there is tremendous potential for mutually beneficial dialogues, my dissertation addresses only a small aspect of this conversation, primarily highlighting what a SML approach might offer TFS. It is my hope that one of the contributions of the project is a compelling argument for more dialogue between TFA, TFS, and SML.

In this dissertation, my efforts are directed first towards exploring how it was that so little exchange with TFA movement knowledges transpired during the period of the emergence of TF in North American universities, from the 1980s −2010. The SML framework did not provide an

adequate methodology to explain how TFS developed with such uneven engagement with TFA. I use IE/PAE to form a research question that can home in on the disjuncture I used as an entry point. Put differently, I ask: what aspects of the social and conceptual organization of North American academic TF/S knowledge production (including on TF/A) contribute to the sidelining of activist intellectual work? The second focus of my project is to demonstrate the advantages of drawing from SML perspectives on the learning and knowledge production in social movements to enrich TFS, specifically by making activist learning and movement *knowledges* more visible within the scholarship on transnational feminisms, transnational feminist theory, and transnational feminist activisms. Blending SML/IE/PAE leads me towards suggestions for how a specific focus by scholars on learning *from* and *in dialogue with* transnational feminist activists would move both TFS and SML in new directions, possibly creating a sub-field that could employ existing and innovative methodologies for documenting and disseminating transnational feminist movement knowledges (chapter 7). Rather than simply arguing specifically for a new sub-field *per se*, I believe that an on-going commitment to different habits of interlocution and reading are needed to bridge the gap between differently-situated and articulated understandings of transnational feminisms. Both interdisciplinary scholarship and sustained equitable exchange between academic, activist, NGO, advocacy and grassroots constituencies, are necessary.

The third impetus for interdisciplinary research is methodological. The problem of disconnected transnational feminist epistemologies motivates this interdisciplinary inquiry, and it also demands a degree of methodological innovation that transcends conventional interdisciplinary strategies such as synthesizing conceptual frameworks elaborated in different fields. Initially I had expected to center my project on empirical study of transnational feminist activist pedagogies and learning, through integrating transnational feminist and social movement

learning frameworks. I still think this is a promising effort (I will return to it in chapter 7). However, in the first part of the dissertation, I proceed differently due to the nature of my previous learning and my curiosity about, as institutional ethnographers say, *how, actually*, the academic discourse of TF had emerged with little reference to transnational feminist activisms or their knowledges. Wary of having disciplinary preoccupations over determine my focus, I sought to engage the academic literature more inductively. I did so with the knowledge that reading the academic literature was inevitably changing my thinking in conscious and unconscious ways. As I became better acquainted with the academic literature on TF, the gap between the field's central preoccupations and the activist priorities that I had witnessed in an Asian TFA milieu pushed me to find an interdisciplinary methodology. I wanted to facilitate a new approach to reading the academic literature, rather than to produce a case study of transnational feminist learning and knowledge practices. I needed yet another interdisciplinary dialogue.

In my search for methodologies, Institutional Ethnography (IE), Political Activist Ethnography (PAE), and to a lesser degree, Grounded Theory (GT), proved to be the most compelling. Each offers some guidance in resisting pre-existing, disciplinary, or theoretical overlays through a more inductive analysis of a given situation or texts, approached *as data*. The research problem that I was beginning to reformulate moved me away from documenting transnational feminist activist knowledge production through fieldwork in Asia. Given the time and distance between my encounters with transnational feminisms (1990s Japan, 2000s in Canada), a shift in my own primary engagement towards textual rather than face-to-face encounters also needed to be accounted for within my positioning as a researcher. The questions asked within these methodologies drew my attention back to the academic literature with a renewed curiosity about how, actually, in a practical, everyday sense, this gap or oversight had

emerged in North American academic feminist scholarship, some of which was already seemingly movement-engaged.

The blended interdisciplinary methodology outlined in chapter 4 centers upon reading transnational feminist academic (TFS) literature inductively, *as data,* for how it orients transnational feminist scholars towards the intellectual work of activists. In other words, it highlights the social and conceptual organization of transnational feminist scholarly orientations to movement knowledges, vernacular activist texts, and activist practices. The methodology aims to de-familiarize taken-for-granted processes and practices, so that their social and conceptual effects become more visible. The textual analysis presented in this dissertation suggests that North American-based transnational feminisms scholars and scholarship would do well to consciously recognize and shift our orientation to activist texts and to movement knowledge practices. Such an approach has cross-disciplinary applications and demonstrates the interdisciplinary methodological innovation made by this dissertation.

The above discussion answers the "why" of interdisciplinarity by addressing: a) the problem-driven nature of my exploration of TFS and SML; b) the potential contribution to a new series of dialogues, perhaps even a sub-field, focused explicitly on SML, activist learning, and knowledge production practices in TFA contexts; and c) the methodological innovations developed through this interdisciplinary project by drawing IE/PAE into the conversation. The "how" of interdisciplinarity remains to be explained.

In terms of the modes of interdisciplinarity engaged herein, I move back and forth between more "compartmentalized" and "integrative" approaches (Lyall et al., 2008, p. 3). Where necessary, discipline-specific sections offer an overview of relevant literature and concerns, such as the overview of the two main (sub)fields: TFS and SML, which are provided in

this chapter, and the introduction of IE/PAE in chapter 4. A more integrative approach is found in the synthesis/comparison section of the second and later chapters. I weave back and forth between "compartmentalized" and "integrative" moments throughout the dissertation according to the requirements of the argument being advanced rather than out of loyalty to a particular style of interdisciplinary formatting. The result is that certain chapters have a more compartmentalized or integrative approach. Since most readers are unlikely to be familiar with both bodies of literature, I provide representative but not exhaustive reviews of relevant literature to advance the argumentation. My comparative analysis of the fields of TFS and SML is the first of its kind that I know of, and as such is, of necessity, preliminary. It is designed to invite the feminist reader, regardless of her disciplinary or interdisciplinary leanings, to engage in reflection upon her own orientations to and use of activist knowledges and texts.

2. A Comparative Analysis of Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS) and Social Movement Learning (SML)

I turn now to a comparative analysis of these two simultaneously emerging sub/fields, their similarities, differences, and the exciting potential for synthesis that this dissertation seeks to demonstrate. In TFS, a literature marked by nuanced, critical, theoretical work, there has been a surprising lack of attention to epistemological questions as they relate to knowledge production in social movement contexts and their relevance for TFS. This is despite activists' work being characterized as inspiring and innovative (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p.1; Alexander & Mohanty, 1997, xvi). The importance of TFA contexts *as generative of new knowledges* has been acknowledged in some work by Alvarez (2002), Conway (2011), Lunny (2006), and Blackwell quoted in Dubois, Tohidi, Peterson, Blackwell, & Rupp (2005). More recently, TF scholars

Chandra Mohanty and Jacqui Alexander (2010) have directed scholars' attention to movements as other sites in which knowledge about the transnational is produced.

Despite these fairly recent and scattered assertions about the importance of TFA contexts as sites of knowledge production, very little has been written about how to "keep up with" movements (Blackwell in Dubois et al, 2005, para. 20). As will be demonstrated in chapters 5 and 6, the present orientation of TF scholarship when it comes to questions of TF *activisms* is predominantly one of being inspired by or learning *about* rather than learning *from* social movements. The interdisciplinary dialogue between TFS and SML that I am suggesting is prompted by the instructive focus in SML on learning and knowledge production in activist and social movement contexts, which might address this weakness of TF scholarship. It is also inspired by some affinities that these two simultaneously emerging sub-fields share.

Clearly, SML has a unique contribution to make through its focus on the learning, educational, pedagogical, and knowledge production aspects of social movements. TFS, closely linked with postcolonial feminist studies, a field known for its attention to epistemological questions in terms of scholarly knowledge generation, could benefit from such approaches as it begins to engage more consciously with movement knowledges. Below I review the similarities and differences between the fields of SML and TFS.

2.1 Common Ground

SML and TFS share much common ground. Both are sub-fields/frameworks that have emerged across disciplines over the past decade or two, in the broader political context of neoliberal globalization, neo-imperialist wars, global environmental and economic crises, and the insurgencies that they trigger. Despite the interdisciplinary character of the two bodies of literatures, each is shaped predominantly by a home discipline with strong links to issues of

social justice and social movements. For SML this has been Adult Education, particularly critical and Marxist schools, and for TFS it has been Women's and Gender Studies (WGS), particularly postcolonial feminist studies. Both of these "home disciplines" have a history of social movement-engagement and have sought to produce scholarship that helps to resist oppression. Accordingly, both newly emerging sub-fields/frameworks draw upon pre-existing conversations across disciplinary and academic-activist divides.

Interestingly, both Adult Education and Women's Studies imagine themselves as unique among disciplines due to their symbiotic relationships with social movements. North American Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) is widely understood to have emerged from the women's movement and to have remained in dialogue with feminist groups and movements, at least to some degree (Desai, Bouchard, & Detournay, 2010; Orr, 2012; Luxton, 2012; Alexander & Mohanty, 2010; Nagar & Swarr, 2010). The field of Adult Education, on the other hand, is not presented as the brainchild of one particular social movement. Rather, Adult Educationalists see their field as symbiotically linked to many social movements in myriad ways. Adult Educationalist Leona English explains this pervasive understanding as follows: "Firstly, all social movements, to some extent, have an adult educational dimension. Secondly, some adult education initiatives were or are social movements. Thirdly, to some activists, all about education, as they define it, is a social movement" (2005, p. 589).

In this section, I consider the similarities and differences between the TFS and SML frameworks, their limited interaction, and argue for the advantages of developing a dialogue between SML and TFS. My analysis of the literature indicates that the lines of inquiry in TFS are strongly influenced by the foci of its home discipline and citational acknowledgement of influential thinkers (chapter 5). While I do not conduct a detailed textual analysis of the SML

literature for how it socially organizes, I do review and synthesize work on important conceptual tools relevant for my research in chapter 3. As we shall see, there is evidence of a central disciplinary concern with *education* and *learning* in Adult Education that guides and shapes the SML scholarship. Given the emphasis on questions of social justice in radical adult education, it is not surprising that SML evidences a preoccupation with researching the educational, pedagogical, learning, and knowledge production dimensions of social movements. Within Adult Education, this emphasis has been explained in terms of political commitments informing the relative success of SML in highlighting the learning and knowledge production. As Chovanec, Lange, and Ellis note:

> [e]mancipatory, liberatory, radical or critical adult education (terminology used interchangeably in the field) is a form of adult education that is generally a response *against* repression, poverty, oppression and injustice and a struggle *for* justice and equality. Critical learning attempts to foster an individual's consciousness of himself or herself is situated within larger political and economic forces and to act upon those forces for social change [emphasis in original]. (2008, p. 188)

In this quotation we find an argument for the political motivation behind the sub-field's focus on learning. I would argue, however, that SML's *disciplinary focus* on learning and knowledge production practices rather than merely its *political orientation* allows it to relate differently to activist learning and knowledges.

TF scholars generally see themselves as politically committed and they investigate questions of power, inequality, oppression and privilege, including between women. However, a keen interest in learning through struggle has not been as evident in the *transnational* feminist scholarship as it is in North American Women's and Gender Studies more generally. Manicom

and Walters (2012) assert that feminist scholarship has emphasized the critical role popular education has played in local and national women's movements, with little work done on TF movements.

2.2 Differences

Despite the similar grounding in home disciplines with strong commitments to social movements, there are many differences between TFS and SML. These include: a) the theoretical traditions drawn upon, b) the movements studied, and c) questions of scale.

2.2.1 Theoretical influences. The bulk of SML and TFS scholarship is generally aligned with conflict theory, an approach which begins with the assumption that inequitable relations of power exist in society and must be resisted.[22] There are important differences, however, in the ways in which power discrepancies are understood to matter and how power, oppression, and resistance are theorized in each field. Interestingly, one area that some TFS and SML scholars agree upon is the importance of work by feminist epistemologists and standpoint theorists (Choudry, 2008; Conway, 2004; Nagar & Swarr, 2010).

Much of the foundational SML work done by critical Adult Educationalists is avowedly Marxist and/or anti-capitalist, according class a central role in analysis (see for example Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002; Mayo, 1999). Marx, Gramsci, Freire, and Habermas are amongst the most important theoretical influences for SML scholars (see for example Foley, 1999; Holst, 2002; Mayo, 1999). Though SML theory is informed by both critical social theory and critical pedagogy, the lack of scholarly work that theorizes the relationship between critical pedagogy and SML has been criticized by Adult Educationalist John Holford. Holford asserts that, "[a]lthough key to the political project of critical pedagogy, social movements tend to be taken for granted as allies, rather than analyzed or theorized…Critical pedagogy, therefore, contains

little resembling a theory or even a critical pedagogy—of social movements" (1995, p. 102). This oversight is addressed in chapter 7.

Briefly, the predominant theoretical influences on TFS are postcolonial, antiracist, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, poststructuralist, and Marxist feminist schools of thought. In chapter 5, I present a textual analysis of TFS wherein I discuss the influence of the postcolonial feminist commitment to name and address inequitable relations between women, including those that occur within relations of solidarity and within social movements/activist contexts (Grewal & Kaplan, 2000).

Intersectional analyses that address multiple axes of oppression are argued by some to now be foundational to Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) (May, 2012; Orr, Braithwaite, & Lichtenstein, 2012). Intersectionality is a distinctly antiracist feminist methodology, developed through the critiques of white North American middle class feminist thought by women of color (see hooks, 1989, 1990, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Hill-Collins, 1990). My own understanding and use of intersectionality is as a conceptual tool that enables us to see how: a) aspects of our identities such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability; and b) system of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, heterosexism, and ableism, mutually shape each other and our lived experiences, positioning individuals and social groups in hierarchically structured relationships of advantage (privilege) and disadvantage (oppression). TFS examines the intersection between sexism, racism, colonialism, nationalism, heteropatriarchy, and/or capitalism in order to provide nuanced analyses of power. TF scholars are far less likely than SML scholars to work with a model of discrete oppressions. They eschew what is often called a "silo" approach to thinking about systems of oppression: analyzing and resisting racism separately from sexism, capitalism, or other systems of oppression. TF scholars

try to understand the mutually reinforcing nature of multiple forms of oppression. This does not mean that all forms of oppression are always addressed. Conway (2011) notes that racism and colonialism are not central to certain feminist knowledges of the World Social Forum. However, in efforts at cross-movement dialogue and feminist movement building, intersectional analysis is increasingly foundational. As such, intersectional analysis has become a hallmark of feminist thought, though it has been adopted by non-feminist scholars who pursue more complicated analyses of power, oppression, and privilege.[23]

Some SML work is intersectional in its analysis of power and oppression, though unevenly so. Choudry (2008) has done nuanced work that looks at the intersecting systems of colonialism, globalization, neoliberalism, and capitalism, but not sexism. Shirley Walters (2005) demonstrates in an excellent case study of learning in South Africa how race and class intersect to produce very different sites of learning for poor blacks who learn through demonstrations, slogan, and songs; and middle class whites who primarily learn by attending workshops. Yet, to a feminist reader, the lack of attention to questions of gender and the preponderance of male theorists is striking upon examining SML literature (see for example Choudry and Kapoor 2010, Hall et al. 2012). SML has not made an intersectional analytic foundational and gender is present at best unevenly. Social movements and systems of oppression are mostly covered in single issue/single movement approaches in these same volumes.

An effort to expand this narrower focus of SML has been advanced by Rachel Gouin (2009) who critiqued Griff Foley's (1999) seminal "learning in struggle" framework from a feminist and antiracist perspective (Gouin 2009). Questioning Foley's emphasis on capitalism as *the* definitive system of oppression, and drawing upon her own research with girls, Gouin seeks to extend Foley's framework intersectionally:

> [a]ntiracist feminist theory within the Marxist tradition makes two contributions that inform the study of social moment learning. It theorizes the interdependence of systems of domination (Mohanty, 2003), and it offers a methodological approach that politicizes personal experience, particularly the experiences of the most marginalized, and uses it as a starting point for sociological analysis (Banerji, 1995). (2009, p. 163)

It is this type of acknowledgement of situated knowledge, positionality, social location and intersectionality that marks much feminist scholarship. Gouin suggests using experiences and learning as entry points for analysis but also stresses the importance of contextualizing such experiences within "a more nuanced social analysis" (2009, p.172). Her suggestion echoes Dorothy Smith's (1987) methodological suggestions around experience being used as an entry point and to provide direction, but always with an eye to analyzing the broader social forces shaping social relations.

There is some movement towards a more intersectional approach in SML. A 2010 symposium at the University of British Columbia sought to expand SML theory and methodology by exploring interdisciplinary methods, centering gender, considering race, using postcolonial and transnational feminist theory, and addressing oppression within movements (Butterwick, Chovanec, Palacios, Rubenson, & Walter, 2010). While such explorations are promising, I would argue that at this moment, some SML scholarship still operates with a less nuanced understanding of power than TFS, particularly in terms of advancing an intersectional understanding of the gendered, heteronormative, racialized, and colonialist aspects of social movements themselves. Gendered and other power dynamics *within* activist communities and contexts of struggle are not scrutinized to the same degree in SML as they are in TFS. While most of my attention in this dissertation is directed towards demonstrating what a SML lens

offers TF scholars, any coming together of these two approaches would offer mutual benefits. SML scholars not already well-versed in feminist critiques of power would certainly gain much from the kinds of questions antiracist and postcolonial feminists ask about assumptions of solidarity; power dynamics between putative allies; and sexist, racist and colonial resonances in liberatory struggles.

2.2.2 Which movements? Given the different theoretical roots and understandings of power and oppression that operate within each body of literature, and the discipline-specific narratives of a "unique" history of social movement affiliation, it is not surprising that the particular social movements studied and analyzed also differ. SML case studies cover many movements, though oppressions and movements are often approached separately. SML research has also been conducted on a wide variety of forms of organizing including, for example, refugee self-organization (Desai and Walsh, 2010), popular revolutions (Austin, 2010), and worker and union organizing (Novelli, 2004). In the comprehensive review of literature offered in the SML field report, compilers found that:

> Most of the scholarship in SML is linked to community development, the women's movement, the environmental movements, the labor movement and anti-globalization movements. [Whereas] Aboriginal self-determination, Gay and Lesbian movements, Peace movements and Antiracism movements have little work done from an SML perspective. (Hall and Turay, 2006, p. 20)

While women's movements have been studied in terms of popular/educational practices in this literature, almost all of this work is at the local or community level, and often not from an articulated SML or transnational approach. Furthermore, as feminists have a longstanding interest in popular education, much of the literature included in the *SML Field Report* is on

nonformal education. Scholarship on feminist and women's movements from an explicitly SML perspective highlighting *informal learning* and or knowledge production is much rarer.[24] TFS scholarship that does address activisms focuses mostly on women's, feminist, anticolonial, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-globalization activisms, but again, this work does not usually acknowledge activist informal learning or highlight movement epistemologies, even if movements are acknowledged as inspirational or important.[25] A convergence of SML and TFS approaches would be both complementary and mutually challenging.

2.2.3 Scale. SML scholarship addresses a range of scales, but the preponderance targets the local and community level followed by the national level (Hall and Turray, 2006). Much of the early SML literature that explicitly uses a SML framework was published in Canada and on Canadian contexts. SML work on *transnational* movements is far less developed. For example, a close examination of the bibliographies in the *SML Field Report* (Hall and Turray, 2006) shows that scholarly work listed as international would have been better labeled allo-national, as it rarely addressed studies conducted between or across national contexts, and usually refers to work done in another (non-Canadian) national context, including the United States, and excluding Quebec. Choudry's (2008) work on the transnational dimensions of anti-globalization activism is a strong exception. Ziadah and Hanieh (2010) offer an excellent discussion of the processes of activist knowledge production in Toronto-based Palestinian solidarity networks/organizing, explaining locally-based forms of transnational solidarity in terms of principles that informed the knowledge generation, such as "keeping the Palestinian narrative central" and viewing knowledge as a "collective responsibility" (p.96). Choudry's (2008) dissertation was an early effort to think transnationally about conducting institutional ethnography within a framework that sought to highlight movement knowledge practices. Very

recently, a new book and a conference began a preliminary exploration of approaches to expand SML scholarship to the international level.[26] It remains to be seen if an explicitly transnational approach will be articulated.

In TFS, interest in the transnational scale is definitive, though the transnational is often examined in relationship to local and national contexts. Scholarship that is explicitly transnational in its framing often studies feminist transnationalism in relation to specific national contexts, as will be seen in chapter 6, where I discuss at length a recent collection of case studies called *Women's Movements in Asia: Feminism and Transnational activism* in which all case studies of feminist transnational organizing are framed at the national level. Research conducted on TFA tends to focus upon international conferences and gatherings (see, for example, Conway, 2010, 2011; Estrada-Claudio, 2010; Hewitt, 2011). I concur with Suzana Milevska (2011) who notes that *regional* TF organizing has not been widely studied and has much to offer TF theory. She notes that in the Balkans this is true particularly for consideration of gender and ethnicity simultaneously, which she believes is more successfully managed at the regional level (p. 52). Some exceptions include *Solidarities Beyond Borders*, by Dufour, Masson, and Caouette (2010), which centers its exploration of transnational feminism around the concepts of place, space and scale. This research includes two case studies with a specifically regional focus: one on Southeast Asia (Caouette, 2010) and one on Latin America (Diaz Alba, 2010). Three articles in online conference proceedings sponsored by *Feminist Review* entitled, "Feminist theory and activism in global perspective" have a regional focus on African, Caribbean, and Balkan locations (Hosein, 2011; Mama, 2011; Milevska, 2011).

SML research on *transnational* feminist or women's movements is particularly sparse. Research has been done on local and national contexts. Stromquist (1994), Barndt (1991) and

Chovanec (2009) have focused on political education in Latin America, though only Chovanec's research on the Chilean women's movement uses an explicitly social movement learning frame. A recent special issue on "Feminism, women's movements and women in movement" of the online journal *Interface: A journal for and about social movements*, Volume 3, issue 2 published in November 2011 contains two articles that could be said to address transnational feminisms and social movement learning (Conway, 2011; Hewitt, 2011). Choudry and Kapoor's (2010) otherwise excellent anthology contains only one of fourteen chapters that addresses gender and transnational issues: a chapter on marriage migrants in Taiwan (Hsia, 2010). In the same volume, indicative of the status of gender-sensitive research within SML, Rodriquez (2010) manages to offer a critique of expertise and NGOized knowledge in the context of migrant issues in the Philippines without addressing gender, though the majority of Filipino migrants are women. Janet Conway's new book, *Edges of Global Justice: The World Social Forum and Its 'Others'* (2013) is the first and only book-length example of what a dual emphasis on TFs and movement knowledges can accomplish from a critical antiracist and postcolonial stance. Lyndi Hewitt's (2009) dissertation on TFA focuses more directly on learning.

3. A Promising Interdisciplinary Dialogue

Women's Studies and Adult Education both share a history of movement-engagement, yet even though their emerging sub/fields – TFS and SML – offer complimentary approaches to TFA/SM and/or their knowledges, a mutually beneficial exchange between the two fields is not yet underway. Despite the coeval emergence and shared social justice connections that have shaped their home disciplines, remarkably few scholars engage with both SML and TFS frameworks.[27] Given the roots of North American Women's Studies programs in the North American feminist movement, postcolonialist feminist concerns about the role of knowledge

production, education and learning in colonization and de-colonization, and the use of the term "transnational feminisms" to refer to a theoretical framework, an emerging (sub-)field of studies, and cross-border activism, it might seem reasonable to expect that scholars of TF would be particularly interested in transnational feminist movement-generated knowledges and activist learning. However, TFS's focus on power inequities between differently located women, including within relations of alliance and solidarity, also indicates caution in such trans-border political projects.

Empirical studies of learning and knowledge production *in* and *through* transnational feminist activism are needed and would address gaps in both TFS and SML. One of the advantages of integrating a SML perspective into scholarship on transnational feminist activisms is that the social relations between different groups of women can be mapped through the learning and knowledge production processes in transnational organizing contexts, as activists negotiate them. As Alexander and Mohanty (1997, p. xiii, xxviii, xlii) assert, decolonization and feminist praxis both have pedagogical dimensions. Yet, certainly what might be called the "coloniality of pedagogy" in transnational feminist organizing is also a concern because assumptions, about who knows and who needs to learn particular analyses and strategies, seem to follow colonialist lines. This then infiltrates purportedly counter-hegemonic struggles with ways of knowing and being that constitute a re-colonization through certain forms or moments of activism. The TF analytic is a useful tool in exploring how colonial dynamics are playing out in women's cross-border advocacy through embedded pedagogical practices such as workshops and trainings, among other practices and activities. My emphasis on TFA and their knowledges should not be taken to imply that such phenomena are more exemplary regarding power relations.

There is a related concern about the NGOization of social movements and resistance on the part of SML scholars (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013). This concern is shared by feminist activist-scholars (Bernal & Grewal, 2014; Sangtin Writers, 2010; deSouza, 2010) and by TF activists.[28] How do the processes of learning and knowledge production reproduce or challenge social relations between groups of women? How are ruling relations manifest within relations of resistance and subsequent co-optation? This is conceptually and politically rich to explore. There is a need for more research that studies the actual practices and processes of learning and knowledge production in TFA contexts in order to generate an empirically grounded account of both the tensions and convergences of NGOs and movements.

I want to suggest that conceptual tools and principles drawn from SML can be useful in orienting TFS differently towards deeper engagement with movements and their knowledges, particularly TF movements. I am interested in approaches that facilitate recognition of, learning from, and comparative and relational research on —the epistemological practices of various forms of TFA organizing, such as NGOs, TANs, and social movements.[29] A SML-inflected empirical study of the learning and knowledge production in TFA milieu is a virtually unexplored approach that promises to shed light on the specificities of transnational feminist activist knowledge production, pedagogies, and learning and their social relations. Conway's work here has been exemplary in integrating engaged, critical feminist perspectives with movement-generated theoretical contributions (2010, 2011, 2013). Some examples of what such integration might look like are discussed in chapter 7. As more people take to the streets across the globe to protest austerity measures and other oppressive practices in a wide array of popular protests and revolutionary rebellions, transnational alliances have shifted yet again, as seemingly disconnected movements seek inspiration in struggles elsewhere, often via social media. The

high degree of innovation in these struggles certainly draws attention to questions of informal learning and knowledge production with renewed urgency. TFA produce knowledge through activist research, activist theorizing/analysis, activist pedagogies, and other practices.

As these two sub-fields of TFS and SML have emerged from home disciplines with connections to social movements and questions of social justice, but are not overly similar in their approaches, there is reason to advance efforts to integrate them. Above, I have provided a brief overview of some key conceptual tools of each framework and initiated a preliminary discussion of their similarities and differences, and where they might productively supplement or challenge each other.

4. Conclusion

In sum, this interdisciplinary dissertation asks questions of TFS from a perspective informed by: a) my own experiential knowledge gained in TFA work, b) the theoretical and empirical work done by SML scholars, and c) IE/PAE. At different moments it brings TFA, TFS, SML, and/or IE/PAE into various conversations. It addresses a need for more dialogue between people who speak different languages, literally and figuratively. My project explores the possibilities of integrating SML and TF/S perspectives, and echoes familiar calls to transcend academic and activist "divides." My research complements but does not replicate the emphases of interdisciplinary Activist Scholarship and other calls for *movement-relevant* research and theorizing that seeks to bring scholarship into meaningful activist-led service to social justice movements (Sudbury & Okazawa-Rey, 2009; Hale, 2008; Bevington & Dixon, 2005). (This literature will be touched upon briefly in chapter 7.) This project seeks more effective, ethical, interdisciplinary ways of doing politically-committed scholarship (creating knowledge) by naming and shifting un/conscious scholarly orientations towards activist intellectual work, in

both senses. It also examines the impacts of conventional scholarly practices, such as citing canonical academic texts, and the particular feminist ethos of thinking of movements as a source of inspiration emanating from their practices.

This following chapters are all interdisciplinary, but differently so. Chapter 3 offers a "compartmentalized" discussion of activist learning and movement knowledges, first through a discussion of my activist and researcher positionalities, and then through the lens of SML. Chapter 4, on methodology, disrupts any expectation that merging TFS and SML approaches will be my initial way forward, and advances another interdisciplinary methodological conversation, through a "compartmental" review of Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Political Activist Ethnography (PAE). This blended IE/PAE interdisciplinary methodology is used in chapter 5, to examine TF scholarship, without much direct reference to SML scholarship. Then, while maintaining a focus on TF scholarship, I return to a more "integrative" interdisciplinary SML/TFS/IE/PAE approach in chapter 6, as I narrow my focus to how TFS is oriented to TFA *knowledges*. I proceed in chapter 7 to explore the promise of an interdisciplinary synthesis of TFS and SML approaches and a conscious effort to shift scholarly orientations to and usages of activist intellectual practices and texts. My interdisciplinary exploration of TFS and SML will hopefully accomplish the work of familiarizing the reader with both fields adequately along the way, so that the synthesis suggested makes good sense by the time we arrive at the conclusion.

CHAPTER 3: THEORIZING TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ACTIVIST INFORMAL LEARNING AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT KNOWLEDGES: A SYNTHESIS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING (SML) PERSPECTIVES

CHAPTER 3: THEORIZING TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ACTIVIST INFORMAL LEARNING AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT KNOWLEDGES: A SYNTHESIS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING (SML) PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter I begin with a description of my activist positionality in order to explain the context of the transnational feminist organizing within which my own activist informal learning unfolded. As Social Movement Learning (SML) scholarship is helpful in making sense of these kinds of individual and collective learning and knowledge practices, I then briefly discuss the emergence of the SML framework, and introduce theoretical innovations and key concepts related to activist learning and movement knowledges.

These different ways of thinking about transnational feminisms–experiential, empirical, theoretical–can be brought into a productive tension and dialogue. I will point the way forward to a new interdisciplinary style of research on TFA, one which recognizes movement knowledges on their own terms. The current historical moment in the wake of the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement, on-going anti-austerity protests, and student demonstrations in many countries, including what is called *Le Printemps Érable* (the Maple Spring) here in Québec, demands that academics and the public rethink their understanding of and relationship to social movements. Indeed, recent feminist conference themes would indicate that feminist academics in North America are thinking about movements with renewed excitement and concern.[30] I hope that this timely study can contribute to the broader concerns of decentering North American academic knowledge production and engaging with activisms and their movement knowledge practices in a less subsuming manner.

1. Towards Theorizing Transnational Feminist Activist Experiential Learning and Movement Knowledges

Language and learning were at the center of many TFA activities that I participated in while working with Japan-based feminist groups active in Asian women's human rights networks. Language learning was one type of learning necessary for many women who wanted to communicate with women internationally. Other types of learning were directly or indirectly linked to the analyses (knowledge) activists were building in their work. This activist learning had both individual and collective dimensions.

Indicative of the intertwined processes of learning and knowledge production embedded in TFA work, I witnessed explicit and implicit research, theorizing, and strategizing. In preparation for joint international projects and meetings, activists had to research and document local conditions and then write reports. Researching, documenting, and drafting reports are all familiar knowledge production practices, and can of course, provide activists with opportunities to distill and occasion learning. Translation of these reports into or from English was often required, as much Asia-regional networking transpires in English. Translation is an important and necessary part of the cross-linguistic dialogues, which testifies to the interwoven nature of language, learning, and knowledge practices. Collective analyses were advanced at international meetings based upon various local investigations of problems common to the East and Southeast Asian regions (such as forced prostitution, exploitative labor practices, sexual assault around US military bases, etc). Such TFA analyses were both theoretical and practical in nature. Women sought to make sense of the *whats, whys,* and *hows* of the problems under investigation. These analyses were often grounded in specific material conditions yet influenced by the discourse of women's human rights (WHR) that was developing through transnational dialogue, especially

during the 1990s. The activists at these WHR meetings discussed, argued, and brainstormed, as they struggled to make sense of the ways in which their different contexts of struggle were linked by systemic oppressions, such as capitalism, colonialism, sexism, and racism. Particular local manifestation of these oppressive forces included: police corruption, local criminal and recruiter networks, inadequate medical care for undocumented workers, lack of local work opportunities, shaming of women who had sex outside of marriage, and corporate and military coordination of male sexual activity. The different understandings of the obstacles to the broad vision of social justice which the activists shared, were woven together through debate and dialogue and articulated to existing human rights instruments. Theory-building involved description and documentation of problems, as well as causal and process-oriented analyses. When the inadequacy of existing systems was revealed through transnational feminist activists' collective analyses, new ideas were suggested both for on-the-ground immediate action, and for more complicated, gender-sensitive human rights (HR) instruments. This indicates that another important aspect of theoretical work – suggesting strategies for change. (prescription/strategizing) – were also part of the knowledge practices that I witnessed. Some grassroots activist groups learned about HR mechanisms in their own countries, or used international mechanisms. Some activists did the conceptual work of translating the language of international human rights documents into Japanese, and advanced comparative analyses of similar Japanese concepts and legal instruments. Some groups joined transnational campaigns lead by feminist INGOs, documented violations and created alternative justice models. Legal experts, other activists, UN documents, and affected women were consulted. Throughout, informal and experiential learning and knowledge practices played a central role in *how* this particular instance of TFA research and theorizing developed.

The theoretical frameworks advanced within North American academic transnational feminist scholarship are useful for critiquing the power relations that structure how participation in United Nations or NGO-centered human rights advocacy can lead to the adoption of hegemonic or universalized understandings, sometimes unwittingly, on the part of women's activist groups (See Hesford and Kozol, 2005; Grewal, 1998). These frameworks are less able to account for the role of teaching, learning, translational, research, and building analyses collectively (theorizing) that transpire as activists resist the imposition of, are co-opted by, or chose to deploy strategically certain hegemonic tools, such as human rights discourse. It is the richness of such knowledge practices developed in contexts of struggle that I hope to see made more visible in a SML-inflected TFS approach to research on TFA.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I explained that my experience of the theoretical, research, educational, coalition/network building, and advocacy work being done by many women in Asia led me to be skeptical of some of the emphases in the scholarship and classroom discussions of transnational feminisms that I encountered after my return to Canada in 2003. I refer here to: a) discussion of North-South in starkly binary terms; b) the dismissive homogenization of all NGO-based activisms through the trope of NGOization; c) addressing activist intellectual work primarily through the lens of praxis while academic scholarship was implicitly deemed more empirically and theoretically sound; and d) presumptions that North American feminist theory could direct activisms elsewhere. In moving from one set of learning contexts (grassroots and transnational feminist organizing milieu in Japan/Asia) to another learning context (a Canadian university) the differences in pedagogical and epistemological assumptions and practices were often jarring. It was at times frustrating to see that the potential of transnational feminist activist learning and knowledge generation was subsumed, ignored, or

marginalized in North American feminist classrooms and scholarship.[31] Clearly, something was amiss. Understanding how, actually, that misrecognition arose, motivates this dissertation.

Admittedly, over the past ten years, there has been a growing interest in transnational feminist *activisms*. Some of my initial concerns have been tempered as a clearer focus on TFA has emerged within TFS over the last decade. There is now an adequate body of research to claim that within TF scholarship, a focus upon transnational feminist activisms *per se* has been established. The publication of three English-language anthologies on transnational feminist *activisms* in one year (2010) implies an acknowledgement of the importance of TFA for North American transnational feminist scholarship.[32] I will examine some of these texts in chapter 6 for what they reveal about scholarly knowledge production practices and orientations to transnational feminist activisms and activist knowledges. In exploring interdisciplinary approaches to TFA, specifically those that can be used to highlight the learning and knowledge practices within these sites, I have found the SML literature most helpful in thinking through various manifestations of TFA.

Below, I offer a detailed account of how my activist positionality was related to the knowledge practices of language teaching, translating, and interpreting. It was from this particular vantage point that I witnessed and experienced informal forms of learning embedded in TFA work. Aspects of my positionality, especially my fluency in English and my Whiteness, meant that there was an inevitable colonialist element to my involvement, despite the fact that I was never employed by Western organizations, was locally based (Yokohama/Tokyo) and locally recruited. There were other forms of institutionalized and systemic oppression that divided the activists with whom I worked. Below, I discuss these issues, and then turn to SML to introduce theory on activist learning and movement knowledges.

2. Activist Positionality: An On-The-Ground Account of Acquiring a Tacit Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledge Base

My interest in the pedagogical nature of transnational feminist activism developed over a decade of grassroots and transnational feminist organizing in Japan. In this section I discuss my activist positionality and the learning and unlearning it allowed, in a familiar feminist manner. I acknowledge how my particular privileges positioned me differently than the women with whom I worked. I also describe my positioning in detail because it allowed me to develop some insights into TFA that lead me to believe that North American academic transnational feminist discourse is too far removed from day-to-day TFA knowledge practices. I believe that this distance impacts how TFA is engaged in TFS. This section situates my own informal and experiential learning in a particular context of transnational feminist activisms, in order to demonstrate to the reader *an alternative epistemological route to a transnational feminist activist knowledge base*, which is not easily accounted for or subsumed by North American academic transnational feminist discourse. In the subsequent section, the reader will encounter an exploration of SML conceptual tools for understanding activist informal learning and movement knowledges.

In the 1990s I worked with a number of Tokyo- and Yokohama-based feminist/women's grassroots groups, non-profit organizations (NPOs), and regional conference organizing committees in both paid and volunteer capacities.[33] My paid work was with the Information Group and the International Group of Yokohama Women's Association for Communication and Networking (YWACN), a municipally-funded NPO. I also worked as a "feminist English teacher" both at this NPO and for other feminist grassroots groups. The transnationally active groups were made up primarily or only of Japanese, resident-Koreans (*zainichi kankokujin,* or

colloquially, *zainichi*). I was almost always the only White person and the only Westerner involved in this TFA organizing. Japan is a Northern country, and I was employed locally, so the conditions of my entry were not that of Northern "expert" assigned by an international non-governmental organization (INGO) to work in "the field." However, the inherent dynamics of Whiteness and Westernness and their particular reception in Japan (Kelsey, 2001) certainly shaped the conditions of my entry, as did my familiarity with Western, and later, international feminisms.

2.1 Feminist English Teaching: The Lucrative Business of Being White, English- and Japanese-Speaking, and… Feminist?

Much of my entry into the worlds of activist Japanese and *zainichi* women's groups was facilitated by my native English speaking ability, my fluency in Japanese, and my background in Western and Japanese feminisms. While my Whiteness was occasionally a barrier in activist contexts, it was likely to manifest in my presence being ignored rather than questioned. In my work life outside of activism, Whiteness was lucrative. This was particularly so for "conversational English teaching." English teaching was a booming industry in the Tokyo area until the Japanese economic bubble burst in the early 1990s. During the bubble years it was not uncommon for young White Westerners to teach "private lessons" in coffee shops or in corporate classes to businessmen for 10000 yen an hour (roughly $100 US).[34] A worker at a non-profit organization at that time made less than that amount per day. During my first year in Japan (1991-2) I was a full time student at an intensive advanced language program for North American graduate students in Yokohama, a city that borders on Tokyo. I supported myself by teaching corporate or conversational English classes at night and on weekends.

I began teaching English to feminists after two years in Japan. The pay was lower, but the work more interesting. My racialized privilege was an uncomfortable issue for me, as was the remuneration. Usually women who attended feminist English classes paid about 2000 yen (about $20) for a two-hour group lesson during which we did close readings of feminist texts and discussed them. I often learned as much as my students in these lessons, and so I felt uncomfortable taking their money at the end of a lesson. I usually earned from about 6000 - 10000 yen ($60-100) for a two-hour lesson. Often, after an evening lesson we would go for drinks and I would pick up the tab with the money they had just given me. Sometimes we would form a bilingual *benkyoukai* [35] (study group), and no money exchanged hands.

I later taught "feminist English" to transnationally-active women through the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center (AJWRC) in preparation for the 1995 NGO Forum in Huairou. Some of these women were daunted by the command of English displayed at NGO gatherings by Asian women from formerly colonized countries, such as India and the Philippines. Some of the women I taught, while inspired by the possibilities that transnational grassroots alliances opened for their work, were also determined to develop a counter-discourse in English to resist the linguistic and cultural imperialism at these gatherings. In the process of "teaching" English and/or Western feminist concepts and language, I was unlearning ethnocentric notions of feminism and activism that I had acquired in Canada (see Lunny, 2006). I was also learning new language, priorities, and strategies from activist language learners and from the texts that they prepared to present internationally.

"Colors of English" was an overtly antiracist, anti-colonial feminist English learners group organized by resident Korean (*zainichi*) feminist activist Park Hwa-Mi, a movement intellectual par excellence (1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001, 2004, 2008). Most of the teachers were

women of color, as Park sought to counter the overwhelming presence of White teachers in Japan, and of the White feminist thought available in translated texts. She wanted to encourage young *Zainichi* women to explore antiracist feminist thought and to improve their English so that they could independently access the wider world of antiracist feminist thinking. Park was a founding member of *Asia no Onnatachi no Kai* (Asian Women's Association, or AWA), which was the first feminist group to explore Japan's implication in the suffering of women in other Asian countries, through transnational corporations, Overseas Development Aid, and corporate-organized sex tourism. It was led by path-breaking Japanese journalist and feminist activist, Matsui Yayori, who was instrumental in challenging the wider Japanese public's stereotypes and ignorance of Asia and Asian women, despite herself at times succumbing to colonialist tone vis-à-vis other Asian women (see English translations of her work on Asian women in Matsui, 1989,1999). AWA later became the Japan-Asia Women's Resource Center **(**JAWRC), where I worked as a feminist English teacher and a volunteer organizer for international women's human rights tribunals and Asia regional women's preparatory conferences for Huairou. Many of the activists had been part of the radical *Ampo* student movement in the 1960s.

Park Hwa-Mi was my mentor. I learned tremendously from her insightful and complex feminist, antiracist, anti-colonialist analyses, while collaborating on translations with her, interpreting at various bilingual feminist events, and as the antiracist White teacher for this particular course, "Colors of English." We had on-going discussions about accountability, racism, and linguistic and cultural imperialism within feminist organizing and teaching. Park Hwa-Mi and I most frequently collaborated on teaching, translations, interpreting, and organizing work. The search for a creative way to express a concept that didn't have a direct

translation was an opportunity to learn, develop, and disseminate new words/ways of talking about and understanding the struggles we were involved in.

I believe that translation and interpretation are major forms of unacknowledged labor involved in transnational organizing, significant sources of learning, and key movement-based knowledge practices. They are also profoundly pedagogical. Translation is a vehicle through which ideas circulate and travel. It can be an important site of learning and unlearning, and struggle over competing knowledge claims. Translators can learn important lessons about the limits of their own language and culture, its biases and presumptions, when they search for a comparable term for a concept or phenomenon that they believe is self-evident and come up empty-handed. Ideally when fluent speakers of different languages work together on translations, a deeper understanding of the issues emerges as the act of translation brings into precise focus the tensions between contexts, discourses, frameworks and apparently similar struggles. In the best of cases, interpretation and translation can be practices and sites of radical, decolonizing unlearning, learning and knowledge production. Creative use of language tensions can lead to the development of deeper more nuanced understandings as well as new concepts and terms. However, in the worst cases, interpretation and translation can be instances of cultural imperialism wherein a culturally specific term that emerged organically or dialectically in one context is imposed through word choice onto another context, short circuiting the development of vernacular terms through engaged oppositional intellectual work. Words such as gender, feminism, and sexism are all often written in *katakana*, the script for foreign loan words. Some feminists use a combination of *kanji* (Chinese characters used in Japanese writing) to highlight the Japaneseness of a phenomenon with a subscript in *katakana*, to indicate how the character is to be pronounced. For example 性 means sex, sexual intercourse, but is sometimes

written with ジェンダー as a subscript, indicating that it should be pronounced and understood as gender.

Aside from the usual daily work of activism, such as stuffing envelopes, and printing flyers, all of the activist labor that I did with transnationally active women involved language to some degree: teaching "feminist English," translating, and interpreting. Thus, given my own pedagogical and epistemological routes through TFA, one of the most stunning absences in TFS is a nuanced discussion of the power dynamics, vagaries, labor, and epistemological import of linguistic translation and the politics of English linguistic imperialism within TF. While my dissertation does not explore these pertinent issues related to language learning, translation, interpretation, or linguistic and cultural imperialism within TFA, I highlight their centrality in my own experience of TFA informal learning to demonstrate how certain absences in the TF scholarship are made visible through an experiential movement-based knowledge base. I believe that questions of Anglo-normativity and translation as a knowledge practice and form of labour are overlooked to the detriment of deeper insights into how feminist knowledges travel, how certain more institutionalized knowledges can overwrite different vernaculars of struggle, and should rightly be of concern to TFS. This is another way in which I sensed a gap between TFA and TFS, epistemologically.

2.2 Paid Work with a Women's Non-Profit Organization

My main form of employment during my early years in Japan was in a hybrid position at Yokohama Women's Association for Communication and Networking (YWACN), a municipal government-funded women's non-profit organization (NPO). I worked mainly in the "Information Group" cataloguing and translating information from newsletters by grassroots women's groups from all over the world. Before the internet, these newsletters were a unique

and incredibly valuable source for women's groups seeking to exchange ideas. The newsletters were written by women from various grassroots and NGO groups from all over the world, describing their situations and sharing their analyses and strategies. Most of the newsletters that targeted international audiences were in English, though many were in other colonial languages such as French and Spanish. YWACN also collected some newsletters in other Asian languages as well.

Class differences were not always readily apparent between women working in Japan-based feminist groups, yet women's financial security varied greatly. This is consistent with the tendency in Japan to self-identify as middle class across great income divides. Some women who worked full time at YWACN were financially independent due to their own earnings, even though married. Most part-time workers were either supplementing their husbands' income or earning their own spending money. A few were trapped in marriages that they wanted to leave, but couldn't for financial reasons.[36]

After completing a year-long intensive Japanese language program as a graduate student during my first year, I was never in a precarious situation financially. Being a foreigner meant that even the terms of my employment were different from those of my co-workers. A Japanese-American feminist friend and I had contacted YWACN looking for volunteer work with a feminist organization. We were offered part-time employment at the standard rate of 5800 yen (about $58) a day that was paid to Japanese workers.[37] When I first took this part-time job, I had a full-time sub-contracted job as a translator at Hitachi working on an electronic dictionary project at 3000 (about $30) an hour. By working both jobs, I was able to pay my bills, repay my student loan debt, and live comfortably, if in close quarters. After a few months, with an international branch of the YWACN slated to open, many English language materials still to

process, and my Japanese-American friend returning to the US for graduate school, my boss approached me to work full time, but not as a "regular employee." We quickly realized that full time hours at the (part-time) *arbeito* rate that would have meant a monthly income of about $800-1000 on which I could not possibly have covered my living expenses. Likewise, I was not eligible for regular employment at this municipally funded office, as I was a foreigner (*gaikokujin*, or *gaijin*).

My boss, a trilingual doctoral student on hiatus and single mother, worked out a hybrid category for my employment, as a sort of consultant. It was a category that did not exist for Japanese workers unless they were actually external consultants, initially hired as such. My status was subject to certain limitations of the *arbeito* status. There was a mandatory two month holiday ever year that meant anyone with *arbeito* status would not be able to avail themselves of certain legal entitlements as workers, which also applied to me. Yet, the organization offered me double the pay that the other part-time staff of the NPO earned, which was about half of what I was making as a translator/re-writer at Hitachi. This meant that I earned a monthly amount somewhere in between what fulltime and part-time workers earned. I was explicitly excluded from all meetings and decision-making processes, and I had no claim to any benefits or employment security. Yet, I also had a sponsor for my visa, and a mandatory two month unpaid vacation every year, which I was happy about, as it would have been nearly impossible to take more than a week of consecutive holiday as a regular worker. While the salaried workers at the Yokohama City-funded YWACN were fairly well paid civil servants, most of the feminist friends I made who worked for NPOs/grassroots groups at that time earned between 15 and 18-man (1500-1800$ a month). At the time a one room apartment in the Tokyo area was at least 7-man ($700 dollars a month) and usually much more. So, even when doing NPO work, I was

making more money than most, but not all, of the other women employed at feminist organizations as regular staff, and always more than the other women who were working as *arbeito*.

I have no doubt that my Whiteness/Westernness were as significant in the creation of this exceptional category for my employment as were my trilingualism and background in Women's Studies and Western feminism. The high volume of women's and feminist English language materials were a source of anxiety for some workers, and having a native speaker versed in feminism was soon deemed "necessary," even though quite a few of the staff were fluent in English. The fact that I could read French helped to a small degree as well. The particular way Whiteness and English are intertwined in popular perceptions worked to my advantage in dealing with the mostly unilingual Japanese male civil servants who agreed to these special terms for my employment upon my supervisor's assertion that she needed help with foreign language materials.

Though I had arrived in Japan well versed in Western feminist scholarship on Japanese feminism, I had no knowledge whatsoever about the world of transnational feminist networks, NGOs, or UN-based advocacy initiatives when I began these collaborations. Most of my learning about this world of women's activism was by osmosis during my period of employment at the Yokohama Women's Association for Communication and Networking (YWACN). In the language of SML it would be called informal learning. I worked in a feminist library that had an impressive collection of Japanese and international women's and feminist newsletters (called *minikomi* or "mini communications," a play on *masukomi* or mass communications). My job involved writing newsletter synopses and organizational bios for foreign women's groups and NGOs. I also wrote all of the annotations for a bilingual annotated bibliography of women's

studies books available in our library (Kawashima, 1997). As a result, while my Canadian, feminist education had done little to prepare me for the world of transnational organizing, my paid work at YWACN meant that I quickly learned informally, or by osmosis, about hundreds of women's groups and NGOs worldwide as I did my work. In the days before internet access, these alterative publications were an incredible source of information about women's groups worldwide. These grassroots groups, development organizations, TANs, and NGOs exchanged newsletters through networks developed alongside UN conferences on women and their satellite NGO forums.

2.3 Unpaid Work at a Grassroots Feminist Organization

In the early and mid-1990s the Japan-Asia Women's Resource Center (JAWRC), which grew out of feminist journalist Matsui Yayori's earlier activists group, Asian Women's Association, began to organize Women's Human Rights (WHR) tribunals, transnationally with other women's and feminist groups from Asia. This organizing was fuelled by active appropriation of WHR discourse and strategies in the 1990s, globally. I was the only White Westerner working on these Japan-based planning committees and was recruited for strategic reasons: I was locally-based, bilingual (Japanese and English), and feminist in the early 1990s when women activists from Japan were increasingly attending United Nations (UN) conferences and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) forums.

With JAWRC, I helped to organize conferences, by coordinating and providing interpretation and translation services. I also provided and organized volunteers for editing and proofreading of the many documents from various countries' groups. Proofreading, or *kousei*, was called *neitibu chekku* for "native speaker check." The implication was that native speakers knew the best way to communicate ideas in English. The risk for overwriting original lines of

critique in this process through the imposition of Western frames and English terms was an on-going concern for me. Some of the women I worked with appreciated the power of language choices to skew messages, others thought that the text should just communicate whatever would make sense to an "English reader." The mostly Asian English readers of these works were however, not necessarily native English readers. Many used English as a second, third, or fourth language. The question of whose words were to be made intelligible to whom, by whom, was laden terrain. As a translator and editor of activist texts, I was able to participate in the process of making the intellectual and political work of *zainichi* and Japanese women accessible abroad.[38] I was part of an informal network of friends and acquaintances who worked on antiracist, queer, and feminist projects.[39] The work ethic was grueling, but the atmosphere amongst the younger activists who did most of translation and editing work, was warm, friendly, and when no one was getting any sleep, silly and playful (Lunny, 1995; Club Satire, 1995). Translation and editing are inevitably linked to important questions about power—and about which feminist concepts travel and/or survive translation. However fraught, at the time, this kind of work seemed like a politically sound use of my energies, as it enabled a counter-balance to the flow of Western and English-language feminist knowledges.[40] If transnational feminisms are marked by multi-directional flows of ideas, translation and interpretation are important knowledge practices. The scant attention paid to these issues within TFS must be addressed.

2.4 Reflection upon Learning and Knowledge Practices Among Unequal Allies

Doing support work for Japan-based nodes of transnational feminist networks, I witnessed moments of tension and solidarity. Transnational alliances were a strategic means to a negotiated, shared goal. Sometimes these alliances were the brainchild of a few well-connected conference-going women in response to NGO and UN initiatives. Transnational alliances were

sometimes motivated by a vision of Asian women's solidarity. Other times, alliances were a desperately needed, multi-sited response to the gendered pressures of globalization, or other transnationally organized oppressive practices that women across Asia were resisting. There was a diversity of views and priorities even within small nodes of the broader feminist network, though culturally, there is a tendency in Japan to defer to ”leaders,” in this case, higher-ranking feminists. Often leaders’ views were not debated. The power dynamics between putative allies were not often openly addressed, except when racialized women pushed for conversations about racialized tensions between *zainichi* and Japanese activists.

Furthermore, though people in Japan frequently self-identify as middle class regardless of their economic status, there was an undeniable class-based hierarchy of TF activists, with many middle and upper middle class women in leadership roles. This was often even more evident among visiting activists from other Asian countries, where the schisms between classes are more sharply defined. English language fluency is often a function of class privilege as manifest through educational opportunities and employment status, enabling a cosmopolitan class of activists to travel to conferences. Depending on the national context, TF activists might be scholars, NGO/development/health workers, or labor organizers. In Japan, I only knew personally of one Japanese academic who worked as an activist, and her field of study was entirely different from her activist work. One famous feminist scholar, Ueno Chizuko (1996, 2004), also worked on the Comfort Women issue with some of the activist women I worked with.

Activist practices and power relations are constantly negotiated as part of the daily work of feminist activism. In reflecting on my own learning and participating in *hanseikai* (self-critical reflective debriefings) after actions, I became convinced that the learning happening in

feminist social movement contexts was extremely powerful, potentially transformative and productive of new, alternative, and counter-hegemonic knowledges. In many ways my TFA informal learning far surpassed my formal learning in Japanese Studies and Women's Studies in North American universities. The learning and knowledge practices were embedded in the day-to-day work of a well-organized network of Asian feminist and women's groups whose existence I had never even heard of in North American feminist classrooms during my undergraduate and graduate studies (1986-1990). While students in such programs today are much more likely to know of the existence of women's and feminist groups in other countries, actual engagement with their intellectual work of TFA is still lacking in many places. (Chapters 5 and 6 will demonstrate this.)

It was evident to me that the learning and knowledge production in transnational feminist activist contexts was not only counter-hegemonic and oppositional. It also heavily re-inscribed existing power relations between women based upon their positionality – particularly their ethnicity, language abilities, and socio-economic class – and foreclosed more radical lines of action and critique. For example, resident-Koreans had a feminist, antiracist, anti-imperialist critique of Japan's present, whereas Japanese feminists often focused on imperialism, vis-à-vis Korea in the past tense, and capitalist exploitation in the present tense. Some Christian women were involved in anti-sex trafficking work and their approaches to these issues were often moralistic and heterosexist. Indeed, regardless of faith, many feminists working on anti-trafficking issues were slow to accept sex workers' rights perspectives, seeing this as a threat to their own work and vision for women of a world free from violence and sexual subservience. Some women, through providing services to migrant sex workers and forcibly trafficked women, began to develop a more nuanced counter-discourse, as they learned from the women to

whom they provided services. So while the world of Asian women's human rights and transnational feminist activism was often a source of insightful critique of Japanese, Western, and global capitalism, it could just as easily be sexist, racist, classist, and homophobic. I emphasize this point to be explicit that my argument about the importance of recognizing how, actually, transnational feminist activist knowledges are produced should not be taken to imply an unquestioning validation of the content of these knowledges. That kind of analysis is also needed.

It was in this complex, shifting environment that I worked as an activist, primarily translating, interpreting, and teaching English. I learned both through the organizing and the language based work about alternative, grassroots, and transnational feminist activist knowledge practices/epistemologies as I came into contact with a wide loosely networked group of Asian women's human rights organizations. What I learned doing this activist work lead me to be skeptical of some TF theory produced in Anglophone North American academic milieu.

2.5 The Transition to Researcher Positionality

No longer based in Tokyo or active in any form of activism in the region, my current status as a White Western researcher has profoundly altered my positioning vis-à-vis the people, practices, and materials from which I learned so much. While living and working as a White, Western, Japanese-speaking, queer activist, I strove to be accountable for my privilege, positioning, attendant assumptions, and blind spots. Though I was always un/learning as I worked, I still missed things and made a lot of mistakes. My close friends would chastise me when I erred. I no longer have those close daily personal relationships of accountability within activist networks or grassroots groups that were the context of my initial encounter with transnational feminist activisms. At that time, I was not a researcher of Japanese feminist

activisms. I did not take field notes or write for academic publications. All of the articles that I wrote were published in small circulation feminist *minikomi* in English and/or Japanese and targeted for activist readers. My *nakama* (comrades) were not the object of my analysis, and the thought of shifting my relationship with the women I worked with to one of researcher/researched made me deeply uncomfortable.

When pressed to return to a PhD program in Japanese Studies at the University of Chicago in 1993-4, which would have meant pursuing doctoral studies on Japanese feminism, I discontinued my studies. I was more interested in learning and struggling *with* rather than writing *about* feminists in Japan. I was learning more on-the-ground about collective means of challenging interlocking oppressions than I imagined I would at a North American university. It is for these reasons that I hope that my dissertation demonstrates an understanding of transnational feminist knowledge production as inherently movement-based, multi-lingual, collective processes for which I am deeply indebted to the many women I have worked with over the years.

While the North American TF scholarship offers a rich theoretical framework for analyzing power relations between differently located women, and transnational structures of oppression, it does not provide adequate conceptual tools to name and theorize the types of informal learning and tacit knowledge gained through activist struggles. For this reason, I now turn to the literature on Social Movement Learning.

3. The Emergence and Definition of Social Movement Learning (SML)

The claim that Social Movement Learning is emerging in Canada as a discourse, a framework, and a field related to Adult Education (Ad Ed) was first advanced in *Social Movement Learning: The State of the Field Report* (*SML Field Report*) published in 2006 by the

Canadian Council on Learning (p. 5). The *SML Field Report* includes an introductory essay, literature review, recommendations, an extensive bibliography of Canadian and international theoretical and historical scholarship, summaries of Canadian and international research studies (case studies, ethnographies, and participatory/action research projects), and lists of academic programs, researchers, and community and non-governmental research initiatives and institutes. The compilers cast their net wide, including academic, community, and research institute initiatives, yet acknowledge an emphasis on Anglo-Canadian content (p.5). Their goal is explained in both movement–relevant and academic terms. The compilers are motivated by a belief that "a deeper understanding of the educational dimensions of social movements will be of use to social movement organizations and activists" (p.5). Yet, they are also interested in developing the scholarly field through a "long overdue" comprehensive review of the field that assists in "deepening our theoretical and evidence-based understanding of social movements, education and learning" (p. 7) particularly as "in-depth and empirical studies of learning in and because of social movements are scarce" (p. 6). As such, the *SML Field Report* and the development of SML as a sub-/field are deemed of interest and beneficial to both scholars and activists. This dual emphasis on the academic- and movement-relevance of social movement learning is a hallmark of this body of literature. It is a claim that resonates with some feminist and activist scholarship as well.

The broad definition of SML offered in the *SML Field Report* is taken from leading SML scholars Budd Hall and Darlene Clover (2005, p. 584-9), and includes "a) learning by persons who are part of any social movement; and b) learning by persons outside of a social movement as a result of the actions taken or simply by the existence of social movements (as cited in *SML Field Report,* 2006, p.6). We can see that the variables addressed in this definition are: a) the

relationship of learners to movements (participant or non-participant), and b) the site of learning (inside or outside of movements). In other words, *learning because of* social movements is central to Hall and Clover's definition.

In the *SML Field Report*, most SML research is said to be qualitative, descriptive (p.7) and/or marked by a definitive focus on learning (p.24). The emergence of some theoretically oriented work is acknowledged. An example of the theorization of learning in social movements, based on a comparative synthesis of three empirical research projects, is offered by Chovanec, Lange, & Ellis (2008). Their individual research projects examined the Chilean women's movement, an adult education course on sustainability offered in Alberta, and a Canada-based global justice-oriented ecumenical coalition. Their analysis leads to four conclusions that provide insights with which to craft a preliminary SML theoretical framework:

> a) social movement learning is "multidimensional," involving "spiritual, cognitive, ethical, emotional, physical, psychological, socioeconomic, political and cultural" dimensions (2008, p. 186);
>
> b) learning "can be assessed by its catalytic validity, that is its ability to transform frameworks of thinking and action" (p.186–7);
>
> c) the processes of learning and action are "dialectical and iterative" (p.191); and
>
> d) intentional, explicit integration of education in social movements is most likely to mobilize people of all ages (p. 186).

Their research indicates that learning is important individually, on a personal level, as well as collectively, for the longevity and effectiveness of movements. My own experience and observation certainly bears this out. Their work also suggests a triple focus for research on learning within social movements, examining the implications for a) individuals, b) movements

and c) scholarly understandings. Typical of the Adult Educationalist approach, learning is the presumed central object of inquiry in this theoretical contribution by Chovanec et al. (2008).

A different account of this coalescence around activism, learning, and knowledge production has been offered by Aziz Choudry, a prolific activist-scholar who uses the terms "learning in social action" and "knowledge production in social movements," more than "social movement learning" in his writing (2009b, p. 5). Choudry characterizes this "emerging body of literature" as "strongly interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary" and concerned with "the politics and processes of knowledge and its reproduction from within social movement and political activist milieus…[w]ith great potential to enrich, broaden and challenge understandings of how, where, and when education, learning, and knowledge production occur" (p.5). Choudry's articulation expands from Hall and Clover's (2005) definition and its narrower Adult Educationalist focus on learning to a broader focus on knowledge production processes, thereby referencing a more multidisciplinary body of literature. This broader approach productively extends the focus of SML to knowledges and incorporates multidisciplinary and academic-activist dialogues.

Though I use the term SML to refer to the body of literature addressed in this chapter, I, like Choudry, also prefer a broader view of that to which the two key components of the term — "social movement" and "learning"— allude. I alternate between the terms "social movement learning," "knowledge production in social movements," "learning/ knowledge production in social action," "learning/knowledge production in struggle," and "activist intellectual work," according to the specificities of what I am discussing. I find most compelling the learning processes and knowledge practices embedded in movement practices, driven by struggle, and the specific ways in which multilingual and transnational alliances operate. In terms of social movements, I favor a broader definition of resistance, such as the one that Rachel Gouin

proposes, when she writes: “I use the terms social action, social struggle, and social movement interchangeably because women engage in social transformation in ways that are rarely recognized in traditional conceptions of protest or revolution, namely within community institutions and organizations” (2009, p.158). Gouin follows transnational feminist theorist Chandra Mohanty’s logic that “everyday feminist, antiracist, anticapitalist practices” deserve the same attention as social movements (as cited in Gouin, 2009, p.4). Gouin seeks to highlight the informal learning that happens when power relations are challenged at the community level. Her theoretical arguments are important for the field of SML more broadly (and will be discussed below in terms of her reading of Griff Foley’s (1999) foundational work on informal learning in and through struggle).

This dissertation considers both: a) learning as more narrowly proposed by Adult Educationalists Hall and Clover (2005), and/or b) knowledge production as more broadly conceived by Choudry (2008). I seek to make visible the *informal learning* that happens in transnational feminist activists’ contexts and its link to knowledge generation for two reasons. Firstly, I remain cautiously hopeful about the possibilities of critical, reflexive, anti-oppressive transnational feminist activist solidarities. Secondly, I find the SML perspective almost completely absent in my review of TFS literature. Certainly, nonformal education, such as popular education, is important in feminist movement contexts. Feminist scholars have a longstanding interest in questions of pedagogy and popular (nonformal) education in local and national contexts (Benjamin, 1994; Briskin, 1990; Gore, 1993; Holland et al, 1995; Lather, 1991; Macdonald & Sánchez-Casal, 2002**;** Mayberry & Rose, 1999; Stromquist, 2004; Walters & Manicom, 1996). Informal learning is less often studied, as such, and is entirely unaddressed in TFS.

I employ social movement learning (SML) as an umbrella term that includes multidisciplinary research on a) various forms of learning, particularly informal and non-formal learning, *in* and *because of* struggles against oppression, and b) knowledge production practices in these same sites. It is hopefully now clear to the reader that due to my own initial encounter with transnational feminist activism, I was predisposed to look for a critical analysis of the power dynamics within this organizing that did not dismiss or conflate the rich oppositional knowledge practices of grassroots and NGOized TF alliances. TFS is very good at the first, and surprisingly weak at the second. Below I will introduce two important conceptual tools that SML offers: a) informal learning, and b) social movement knowledge production processes (what Eyerman and Jamison (1991) call "cognitive praxis") that help to bring such processes and practices into sight.

3.1 Informal and Nonformal Learning: Preliminary Definitions and Distinctions

Though Adult Educationalists are said to use a variety of definitions for learning or to leave the term learning undefined, there are common elements which are emphasized in such definitions, including: outcome, process, knowledge, experience, interaction, context, and meaning (see for example Tisdell, 2005, p.349)[41] Conventionally, three broad categories of education/learning are used in approaches that highlight the institutional status and *site of learning* as significant variables in categorizations of learning. These categories are: formal, non-formal, and informal.[42] As my interest is in *informal* learning and knowledge production in transnational feminist activist contexts, I will focus my discussion on the concepts of informal learning and movement knowledges in this chapter. The term *nonformal* learning is sometimes used interchangeably with informal learning, however for the purposes of this discussion it is important to differentiate between these two categories of learning/education, both of which

transpire in social movement contexts. All of the theorists below are influenced to some degree by the foundational work of Paolo Friere who's clearly articulated of the role of learning in social struggle in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970).

Nonformal education, according to Daniel Schugerensky, "refers to all organized programs that take place outside the formal school system, and are usually short term and voluntary" (2000, p. 2). A more detailed definition is offered by the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre (AKLC) and Praxis Research and Consulting in Canada: "[n]onformal learning refers to learning activities that are organized and structured, but not normally laddered and not normally leading to a widely recognized credential; an example is a noncredit program or workshop" (2007, p. 5). Some researchers have argued that non-formal education is generally more significant than informal learning, such as Clover & Hall (2000) and Stromquist (2004) in the case of feminist popular education. Some recent literature on SML, however, seeks to emphasize the importance of *informal* learning and correct what is perceived to be an overemphasis on nonformal learning in adult education (Foley, 1999; Gouin, 2009; Choudry and Kapoor, 2010).

I have chosen to focus on informal learning rather than nonformal learning because initially it was the *embeddedness* of the learning that I witnessed and experienced in transnational feminist activist contexts that most fascinated me.[43] Another reason for my choice is that informal learning is the least visible formal learning in the TFS literature, though academic feminists have a long-standing interest in popular education and consciousness raising, a nonformal form of education, within and outside of the North American context.[44] In recent years, the scholarship on informal learning has challenged the field of Adult Education to broaden its focus away from: a) nonformal learning/education, and b) the role of adult educators

in social movements. I share both the concern of SML scholars that informal learning done in contexts of struggle is too often overlooked (Foley, 1999; Lunny, 2006; Choudry and Kapoor, 2010) and the desire to see social movements be of central concern for adult educators (Holford, 1995) and transnational feminist scholars.

David Livingstone, a researcher on the Canada-wide research project, New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL), offers a preliminary definition of informal learning as:

> any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill that occurs outside the curricula of institutions providing educational programs, courses or workshops….in any context outside institutional curricula. The basic terms of informal learning [e.g. objectives, content, means and processes of acquisition, duration, evaluation of outcomes, applications] are determined by the individuals and groups that choose to engage in it. Informal learning is undertaken on our own; either individually or collectively, without either externally imposed criteria or the presence of an institutionally authorized instructor. (1999, p.51)

Many scholars have attempted to further refine understandings of informal learning. Below I will introduce some key theorists, whose work is particularly helpful in explaining what informal learning is and the different aspects which define and characterize it: Daniel Schugerensky (2000); David Livingstone (his revised definition) (2000); Kathryn Church, Nina Bascia, & Eric Shragge (2008); and Griff Foley (1999).

3.1.1 Schugurensky: Informal learning as defined by *intentionality* and *consciousness.* Schugurensky explains his approach to defining informal learning not only by reference to the site or context, but with emphasis on *whether learners are intentionally learning*

and *whether or not they are aware* that they are learning at the time. He writes of a collective research project on lifelong learning:

> [informal learning] takes place outside the curricula provided by formal and non-formal educational institutions and programs. …we are deliberately using the word 'learning' and not 'education', because in the processes of informal learning there are not educational institutions, institutionally authorized instructors or prescribed curricula. …we are saying 'outside the curricula of educational institutions' and not 'outside educational institutions', because informal learning can also take place inside formal and non-formal educational institutions. In that case, however, the learnings occur independently (and sometimes against) the intended goals of the explicit curriculum. (2000, para. 5)

Schugurensky (2000) uses these two criteria—*intentionality* and *consciousness* (awareness at the time of learning)—to subdivide informal learning into three categories:

a) *Socialization* involves neither intentionality nor consciousness.

b) *Self-directed learning* involves both; the learning is intentional and conscious.

c) *Incidental learning* is not intentional but the learner is conscious that s/he is learning.

He depicts this as follows:

	Intentional	**Unintentional**
Conscious	Self-Directed Learning	Incidental Learning
Unconscious		Socialization

Chart based on Schugurensky's categories (2000).

Schugurensky (2000) explains the blank box in this chart by saying that he cannot think of any examples where learning is intentional and unconscious.[45] In Schugurensky's model, informal learning can be "additive" in the sense that new knowledge is gained without a paradigm shift occurring, or "transformative" such that a paradigm shift occurs and previous knowledge is questioned.

Schugurensky's work is useful in explaining the specificities of informal learning without losing sight of the importance of nonformal learning contexts, in which much informal learning also occurs. This resonates with my own experiences of unintended learning through the daily work of activism as well as through nonformal educational activities such as attending/facilitating workshops and teaching English classes to activists. Sometimes this learning had less to do with the intended focus of a given workshop, lesson or training session and more to do with the "hidden curriculum" (Jackson, 1968) of such spaces. Workshops are nonformal learning environments commonly organized at transnational feminist gatherings in which informal learning also happens. One might attend a workshop with a particular intention, i.e. wanting to learn about how austerity budgets are being resisted in other national contexts, yet come away realizing that due to the fast nature of the exchange, only those with fairly fluent English participated in the discussion, which in turn has implications for whose analyses were highlighted in the discussion. This is an example of informal learning in a nonformal educational context.

3.1.2 Livingstone: Informal learning as defined by *who initiates it*, and by recognition of *what/how learning happens*. Livingstone has recently refined his early definition, which was cited above in the section differentiating nonformal and informal learning. He offers a distinction between two forms of informal learning with the presence of a mentor being the significant variable. Livingstone refers to "intrinsic informal learning activities" which involve a mentor who informally provides instruction (2000, para. 6). The second type of informal learning occurs without a mentor, at the initiative of an individual or group, in an unstructured way. He asserts that this second type can be explicit or tacit: "The important criteria that distinguish explicit informal learning are the retrospective recognition of both a new

significant form of knowledge, understanding or skill acquired on your own initiative and also recognition of the process of acquisition" (2000, para. 6). My discussion of my own activist learning at YWACN in the early part of this chapter is an example of explicit informal learning. The learning that transpired in dialogue with my activist mentor, Park Hwa-Mi, would be an example of what Livingstone calls "intrinsic informal learning activities." Likewise, in hindsight, there was much tacit informal learning happening amongst activists.

Livingstone's contribution is to highlight the fact that informal learning sometimes happens through conventional dynamics wherein a person with more knowledge or experience imparts their knowledge to others. An example in activist contexts might be when a long-time activist mentors less experienced activists. Livingstone also emphasizes the importance of learners being able to *explicitly* acknowledge both *what* they learned and *how* they learned it. This differs from other theorists, such as Griff Foley (1999) who argue that people learn without recognizing that they learned. Livingstone also differs from Schugerensky, who emphasizes awareness at the time of learning, by extending the definition of informal learning to include retroactive awareness of learning. This approach also differs from more overtly politically-engaged scholars, such as Church, Shragge, and Bascia (2008), who are less inclined to quibble over these different emphases, preferring to stress the contexts of struggle and role of community.

3.1.3 Church, Shragge and Bascia: *Contesting categorizations, emphasizing participation in communities,* learning out of *necessity*, and making links to *forms of knowledge*. In a collection of case studies, Church et al. resist the implicit scholarly imperative to "unify or synthesize" understandings of the category of informal learning (2008, p.vi) and stress that such categorizations are of limited usefulness outside the context of survey research

(p.7). Church et al. notes that they began their project with a conception of informal learning and eventually arrived at what contributor Stephen Billet refers to as "a conception of learning premised on *(people's) participation in communities*" (2008, p. vii [emphasis added]). The concept of informal learning therefore organizes their collection of case studies even as it is contested by them. They share the "contested and contradictory" understanding of informal learning that Foley (1999) put forward. As seen with Choudry's (2009b) approach to SML, Church et al. *highlight the connection between informal learning and various forms of knowledge*:

> Informal learning is both voluntary and involuntary, sometimes simultaneously. It blurs the boundaries of intellectual, technical, social, political and emotional forms of knowledge. It is embedded in the processes of daily life as a means for coping, survival and change…. individuals and groups learn when their life circumstances demanded it in ways that reflect the circumstances. (p.3)

These critical scholars are skeptical of academic impulses to taxonomize. Theirs is a useful reminder of the limitations of definitional endeavors; however, in initiating an interdisciplinary dialogue between SML and TFS, such introductory frameworks remain an expedient way to familiarize scholars with some of the working assumptions and emphases of SML. Church et al. (2008) also make explicit links to various forms of knowledge and stress that learning can be a survival mechanism as much as a source of personal growth or empowerment. Their caution is well taken. Foley (1999), whose work influences that of many SML scholars, has advanced a grounded theorization of informal learning in rich interpretive case studies. His work on informal learning in struggle is seminal to the field of SML.

3.1.4 Foley: Learning in struggle: Informal, incidental, embedded in action, contradictory, often unrecognized. One of the earliest, best, and most cited works on the hidden learning dimension of social action is *Learning in Social Action* written by Australian radical adult educationalist Griff Foley (1999). Foley is critical of the dominant approaches in mainstream Adult Education, which he characterizes as instrumentalist, individualist, abstract, and professionalized (1999, p.138). While he welcomes both the debate over the connections between adult education and social movements and the acknowledgement of social movements as important emancipatory learning sites for adults, he is also critical of the ways in which much adult education research proceeds. Foley wants to see research that is less abstract, not beholden to debates about "old" and "new" social movements, more grounded in specific cases, and which explores learning "from the perspective of social movement actors or broader social interest" (p. 134). Foley justifies his emphasis thusly:

> For me the most interesting and significant learning occurs informally and incidentally, in people's everyday lives. And some of the most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them and to work out ways of doing something about it. (p. 1-2)

He explains his use of the terms "informal education and learning" to address the ways in which "people teach and learn from each other naturally and socially in workplaces, families, community organizations and social action" (1999, p.7). I suspect that it is this understanding of the embeddedness of learning in struggle that has made Foley's work resonate with activists and scholar-activists. Foley highlights the embeddedness of such learning and notes that some of his participants did not realize at the time that they had learned significantly until they discussed their experiences at a later date. His research interviews often occasioned that reflection.

Accordingly, the unacknowledged, tacit, or unconscious aspects of learning in struggle are also important to Foley's work. He uses the term "incidental learning" to refer to the learning that happens as a byproduct of other daily activities including "as people live, work and engage in social action" (p. 6–7). This is what I earlier referred to as "learning by osmosis" (Lunny, 2006; Lunny, forthcoming).

Why study informal learning? For Foley, it is important to make visible the kinds of learning embedded in people's daily life, without romanticizing it. He notes that this learning reproduces oppressive thought and action, on the one hand, yet on the other, enables some people to develop a social analysis and critique (1999, p. 3–4). Having identified a need for grounded case studies of learning in struggle, Foley offers an analysis of informal learning through his own case studies as well as from the implicit messages about informal learning culled from case studies done by other scholars. He provides an interesting methodology for using case studies already published for other purposes: as data for an analysis of learning in struggle. Foley's own analysis is guided by a theoretical framework that he says provides:

> a) A broad conception of education and learning.
>
> b) An emphasis on the relationship of education and learning to collective and emancipatory struggle.
>
> c) An analytical framework which enables connections to be made between learning and education on the one hand, and analysis of political economy, micro-politics, ideologies and discourses on the other. (1999, p.6)

Foley concludes by emphasizing the *tacit, informal, incidental, and embedded* nature of this learning in struggle (p. 3). Importantly, the bulk of the learning Foley identified was not the result of formal or nonformal learning, but was an unintended byproduct of activities

undertaken. His careful analysis functions as a reality check on romanticized notions of learning in struggle as necessarily emancipatory or evidence of agency. Instead, he asserts that informal learning is "complex and contradictory" and often unrecognized (p.4).

Of these theorists, Foley's work has had the greatest impact on the emergence of SML. He paints a vivid picture of the contradictory way in which learning unfolds in daily life and in struggle. His theoretical framework has been the basis of much SML scholarship and has been adopted and extended by others (such as Gouin, 2009; Choudry, 2008).

***Important characteristics of informal learning*.** The above discussion of informal learning highlights some of the main emphases that adult education scholars have identified as they enrich understandings of the phenomenon of informal learning. These include:

a) intentionality and consciousness (Schugerensky, 2000);

b) learner agency and awareness of the content and processes of learning (Livingstone, 2000);

c) the importance of participation in communities, the necessity of certain kinds of learning for marginalized people, and the importance of making links to forms of knowledge (Church et al, 2008); as well as

d) the embedded, incidental, contradictory, and tacit nature of this learning (Foley, 1999).

I have limited my examination to SML scholarship that addresses informal learning in particular because I believe that the field of TFS would benefit from recognition of the *embedded nature* of *this learning and the related knowledge processes that transpires in TFA contexts*. With these activist knowledge practices acknowledged, it becomes easier to understand that TFA might well operate with unique epistemologies. I argue that to understand the gap between TFA

and TFS that I investigate in this dissertation, their different knowledge practices need to be acknowledged.

My focus in this section has been on works by adult educationalists who have contributed significantly to developing the sub-field of studies on *informal* learning, both inside and outside of social movements. There is further literature on informal learning and related concepts which are used to distinguish forms of learning in social movement contexts. Terms used include the pedagogy of social movements (Holst, 2002); collective learning (Kilgore, 1999); the pedagogy of mobilization (Dykstra & Law, 1994); learning in struggle (Foley, 1999); transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991); and social learning, organizational learning, solidarity learning, and redefinition of the self (Choudry & Shragge, 2006); emancipatory learning (Thompson, 2000); lifelong learning, tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1958). Other terms commonly used and defined in different ways include: learning sites, social learning, political learning, solidarity learning, and transformational learning. Although a full review of these competing definitions and typologies of learning is beyond the scope of this overview, I do want to note that further theoretical refinement of the concept of informal learning is a central concern of some Adult Education and SML literature.

3.1.5 Why informal learning matters for transnational feminist activisms and transnational feminist studies. The theoretical work discussed above on informal learning is useful in understanding the types of informal learning that I alluded to above in my account of acquiring a tacit TFA knowledge base experientially. SML theoretical literature can help to guide the documentation, recognition, and analysis of informal learning processes and knowledge practices in TFA. I believe that there is a necessarily pedagogical dimension to much activist work. When tackling any issue, activists (need to) learn about: what is happening; why

and how oppressive circumstances are maintained; how to best resist oppressive forces; how to develop creative, alternative ways of establishing and sustaining socially just circumstances; and how to determine where they went wrong. Informal learning is intimately linked to knowledge practices in movement contexts.

While learning may not be part of any individual activists' primary goal, it is hard to imagine how action can unfold without some degree of individual and collective learning taking place as part of struggle. Informal learning, when recognized, can be important personally and individually for activists, but it also has profound collective implications for movements. It informs actions, analyses, strategies, and approaches to both solidarity and resistance. I argue that informal learning is part and parcel of the intellectual work of thinking collaboratively, creatively, and critically to resist the disparate, yet connected forms of oppression that manifest in different sites. Collective learning is profoundly important for movements, and is an on-going process that can begin before movements emerge, while they are active, and in hindsight, through reflection and analysis of the paths that past movements took. In transnational feminist alliances, activists often conduct comparative and relational analysis of specific issues, through collaborative, multilingual research and strategizing. They learn and produce knowledge.

Interestingly, leading scholars of TFS, Alexander and Mohanty (2010), recently emphasized the importance of *comparative* and *relational* research approaches within transnational feminist scholarship, explicitly referring to movements as other possible sites of knowledge production about the transnational. The fact is that Southern and Northern activists have been engaged in knowledge production as part of their advocacy and resistance efforts, with textual evidence of this since at least 1975. Postcolonial feminist scholarship has made repeated overtures to activisms "elsewhere," including anthologizing nationally framed case

studies (see Alexander and Mohanty, 1997; Mohanty et al, 1991) since the 1980s. Yet a sustained dialogue between transnationally active activists and scholars has not emerged as a guiding principle of North American transnational feminist scholarship. This initially confounded me, given my experiential knowledge base, TFA and their knowledges seemed like an obvious place to begin. My study seeks to explain, how, actually, TFS' oversight of TFA transpired despite political alignment.

Even as discussions of TFA appear more frequently in TFS discourse, the development of TF in North America has continued to struggle with the anti-colonial imperative of decentering NA academic knowledge production. My argument that informal activist learning is an important epistemological route to understanding TF is one of the threads that weaves through this dissertation. Substantially recognizing the epistemological implications of activist learning and knowledge production could advance efforts to decenter North American academic approaches to transnational feminisms (see Fernandes, 2013 for an excellent analysis of this problem).

It is for these reasons that I believe SML has much to offer TFS. Yet, these same points also inform my suspicion that, despite the dearth of empirical case studies of TFA and their knowledge practices, new interdisciplinary case study research alone will not accomplish the task of decentering NA TF knowledge production. The above synthesis of research on informal learning depicts people learning in a range of struggles, from daily struggles for survival to overt, organized, collective political opposition. Deeper understanding of the epistemological and pedagogical nature of various overt and embedded movement knowledge practices, are, I believe, useful to both transnational feminist activists and scholars. Throughout this dissertation the place of TFA and their knowledges within TFS are examined from different angles. In the

next section, collective forms of knowledge production within social movements are discussed specifically.

3.2 Movement Knowledges

3.2.1 Eyerman and Jamison: Cognitive praxis and movement knowledges. In *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach,* Eyerman and Jamison (1991) argue that social movements form and evolve through "cognitive praxis" or cognitive processes that generate collective identities and new knowledge. In later work, Jamison reflects on the study of environmental movements which he undertook with Eyerman, and notes that the concept of cognitive praxis was initially coined to explain "the knowledge-making activity that takes place in social movements" (2006, p. 47). Jamison discusses the ways in which environmental movements combined three types of knowledge-making activities: "world-view assumptions (cosmology), criteria for technical change (technology), and organizational forms (organization) into an integrative cognitive praxis" (p. 47). Jamison later stresses in his reflection on his earlier work with Eyerman, that this empirical work on environmental movements is not meant to be applied wholesale to other social movements (p. 47).[46] I am not interested here in applying these three categories of knowledge-making to TFA. Rather, in this section, I review some approaches to research and theory which acknowledge movements as likely sites of knowledge production, in order to make the case for more grounded and empirical research on TFA and their knowledges as an important yet largely unexplored approach, within both TFS and SML.

In a broad overview of the relationship of Western social movements to Western scientific knowledge, Jamison (2006) argues that social movements have played an important role in the development of science for centuries and that both activists and academics have too often ignored this fact. While I am not concerned in this dissertation with scientific knowledge

per se, I discuss Jamison's argument below because his emphasis on how *different knowledges develop, interact, and are mobilized in social movement* is relevant to my argument. In TFA, one certainly sees that economic, legal, environmental, health-related, bureaucratic, and experiential knowledges, for example, are mobilized. I use the term "movement knowledges" to refer to knowledge generated in movement contexts by activists, including through informal learning and intentional knowledge production as well as through mobilization and synthesis of other forms of knowledge. I use the term knowledge practices throughout to refer to any7 and all forms of generating and producing knowledge.

Jamison's (2006) later work is instructive for its historicized discussion of: a) the processes by which movements generate knowledge, b) how different knowledges interact (hybridization) and c) how movement knowledges are taken over and institutionalized by more powerful interests (cultural appropriation). I will review this work below and then address its usefulness for explicitly highlighting transnational feminist activist *knowledges*, rather than activisms, as is more common in TFS. The distinction between TFA and transnational feminist activist knowledges (TFAK) is key for my argument.

Cultural appropriation, institutionalization, and the overwriting social movement knowledges. I contend that the work of keeping the social movement roots of contemporary TFA thought visible is made more difficult by processes that Jamison refers to as cultural appropriation and hybridization.[47] Jamison (2006) theorizes the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment as social movements that changed scientific knowledge through these two processes. For Jamison, various forms of cultural appropriation were the means by which movements' scientific "ideas, techniques and organizational forms" eventually met with broader acceptance (p.47). He notes that such diffusion is accomplished at a cost. Cultural appropriation

is explained as "a kind of institutionalization process, by which the looser, more informal spaces that movements create for knowledge production are replaced, or taken over, by more established organizational forms" and through which "the powerful gain control over these processes" (p.48). This description of cultural appropriation certainly resonates with debates over NGOization, a process of institutionalization that concerns many scholars of TFS and SML, as well as many activists in TF milieu (see for example, Choudry and Kapoor, 2013; Bernal & Grewal, 2014). I will refer to aspects of this process as institutionalization or overwriting. One of the conclusions of my dissertation is that a comparative analysis of the processes by which TFAK were institutionalized in the North American academy and TANs/NGOs is a compelling future research direction.

Processes of appropriating, overwriting, and institutionalizing movement knowledges should be an important—and implicating—concern for SML, TFA, and TFS. Some SML scholars have addressed with alarm the role that NGO knowledge production plays in overwriting and silencing marginalized voices. Choudry and Kapoor write: "[t]he professionalization of dissent, the valorization of certain kinds of knowledge, the devaluing of other forms which emerge from within social struggles, and dubious claims to represent frequently go hand in hand in these milieus" (2013, p. 15). They also acknowledge the relevance of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) astute analysis of the colonial nature of knowledge struggles as involving the imposition of Western liberal scholarship, including "legal frameworks, textual orientation…and rules for practice" among other aspects, as elements at play within some processes of NGOization (2013, p. 15). Desai and Walsh (2010) offer a concrete example of this process. They expose how Somalian refugees in South Africa were massacred by their neighbors and denied the protection of police and human rights law, due to their refugee status.

When NGOs conducted research on the massacre, Somalian testimonies were passed over in favor of documenting South African views on Somalis. Somali self-organization was not documented by these NGOs. Transnational feminist activists, whether working with NGOs or not, would do well to reflect on how their own strategies may be complicit with such processes of appropriation and overwriting of subaltern knowledges and of other anti-colonial knowledge struggles.

The moment of my own initial TFA engagement was one that was profoundly impacted by the process of institutionalizing feminist perspectives on women's human rights in NGOs and UN practices and instruments. Tremendous gains and losses were sustained for feminists at this time, and the more radical visions were drowned out by liberal forces. In transnational feminist contexts these processes are often facilitated by liberal-leaning and statist women (femocrats) who advance "gender mainstreaming" strategies in order to institutionalize feminist knowledges, as they become more acquainted with state and inter-governmental organizational (IGO) processes and mechanisms.

The interpellation of feminist advocates by hegemonic ideologies as they enter into negotiations with states and inter-state organizations is a major risk associated with the NGOization processes within TFA (Alvarez, 1999, 2009, 2014). Learning new ways of thinking and working are clearly part of this transformation, which reminds us of Foley's point that learning in social movement and NGO contexts is not necessarily emancipatory. In considering the blank box in Schugurensky's (2000) chart (above), which indicates a kind of learning that is intentional and unconscious, I suggested that the learning that transpires as feminist activists interact with UN programs and conferences might occasion a kind of learning or interpellation by dominant ideologies that is not recognized by activists, who intend to enter into such

negotiations to advance what is initially a more radical vision. My comments here are speculative, and meant only to indicate the usefulness of empirical research on the implications and effects of the role of learning in such cases. This kind of research could make a valuable contribution to grounded case studies for SML and to transnational feminist theoretical arguments about human rights as regimes of truth (Grewal, 2005; Hesford & Kozol, 2005). It would also be helpful to have empirical data on aspects of how, actually, the loss of movement control of knowledge production processes/discourses transpire in the process of gaining broader acceptance of ideas, whether through NGOization, or NGO networking. These are important concerns for transnational feminist activists and scholars and social justice movements.

Hybridization, movement intellectuals, and movement/collective knowledges. Jamison, in his historical study, looks at the specific position of key agents such as craftsman and identifies a process – hybridization -- which refers to "the bringing together of social roles and forms of knowledge that were previously separated" (2006, p. 47-8). This transformation speaks to the powerful impact movements and movement intellectuals have had on scientific thought and practice, but also to the fact that once professionalized or institutionalized, these movement knowledges are subsumed under institutional and disciplinary approaches.[48] Jamison sees these processes at play in new social movements as well:

> Out of the anti-imperialist and student movements of the 1960s and the environmental and women's liberation movements of the 1970s have emerged a range of alternative ideas about science, in form, content, and meaning, which have given rise to new theories, academic fields, and technological developments. (p.55)

While Jamison emphasizes the hybrid nature of this knowledge, I would argue that hybridization, itself, is often linked to processes of institutionalization of movement knowledges.

Jamison (2006) acknowledges the importance of both *individual movement intellectuals* and the *collective knowledge* of movements. He notes the variety of forms that these processes have taken in different historical periods and different movement contexts, yet asserts the common importance of the *collective* origin of scientific knowledge:

> What seems to be central to scientific knowledge is its collective origin, or, at least, its basis in some kind of collective knowledge interests. What has recurred through history has been both an institutional narrowing, or closing, of what have often been broader and more open forms of knowledge production, as well as an individualizing of what often began as processes of collective creativity. It might be suggested that by focusing their attention as much as they have on individuals, historians and other students of science have thus tended to neglect the collective basis of much, if not all, scientific knowledge. (p. 58)

This emphasis on the *collective* basis of movement knowledges is an important one for TFS to consider. It is instructive for the argument that I am advancing here and echoes the insight of Briggs (2008) around Northern academic's unacknowledged intellectual debt to Southern movements. North American academic knowledge production often emphasizes single-authorship. The difference between individualized and collectivized forms of knowledge production are relevant to the task of learning to see the different epistemologies of TFS and TFA more clearly. John Holford explains that the importance of sociologists and social movement theorists Eyerman's and Jamison's (1991) contribution for Adult Education was that it enabled adult educators to:

> move from the appreciation that social movements are important phenomena in the learning process of the individual [and even collectively of the groups and organizations] which compose them, to a view that they are *central to the production of human knowledge itself*. [emphasis added] (1995, p.101)

Eyerman and Jamison sought to establish knowledge production in social movements as an object of inquiry for sociologists and adult educators. TF social movements have been sites of hybrid counter-hegemonic and hegemonic knowledges, sometimes lead by key movement intellectuals, and sometimes more broadly collective in terms of the generation of ideas. A synthesis between TFS, TFA, and SML epistemologies is therefore promising.

3.2.2 Why transnational feminist studies (TFS) needs a social movement learning and knowledges perspective. Jamison's later work (2006) makes the important assertion that social movements have influenced academic and scientific knowledge production for centuries. Jamison's claim that both activists and academics pay inadequate attention to the relationship between social movement knowledge processes and their impact on academic (and scientific) knowledge practices resonates with my concerns about some of the ways in which activist knowledges have been taken up and/or overwritten in TFS and will be elaborated upon in chapters 5 and 6. Eyerman and Jamison's work on cognitive praxis is important for transnational feminisms because it makes visible the knowledge production/practices in social movements by offering an empirically generated theorization of how this happens. Their argument validates what many activists know from experience: that movements generate knowledge. The SML conceptual tool "cognitive praxis " in social movements, or simply "movement knowledges," can guide TFS scholars in thinking about: a) a wide range of knowledge production practices and processes in movements, both promising and dangerous; b) the interaction and mobilization

of *different knowledges* within movement contexts; and c) the relationship of movement-generated and academic TF knowledges, including the risk of academic knowledges overwriting movement-generated thought; and d) the different and similar aspects of TFA and TFS epistemologies.

Jamison's analysis provides a model for thinking about how social movements mobilize different, including pre-existing, knowledges and how movements can challenge hegemonic knowledge formations. Transnational feminist activisms have both resisted and succumbed to neoliberal and capitalist knowledge formations. For example, Adrienne Roberts (2012) unpacks "transnational business feminism" exposing the ways in which corporate-led efforts for gender equality are being mainstreamed within networks of NGOs and state organizations.

Empirical studies of TFA might explore hybridization and institutionalization processes in terms of the knowledges generated in TFA milieu. By using a SML framework, what is lost/suppressed in such hybridizing knowledge transitions can be documented and analyzed. Such understandings might be useful in terms of resisting the overwriting of oppositional strands of activist thought with more liberal and conservative advocate thought, as well as by the research and theoretical practices of scholars.

Recently, a renewed emphasis on "movement-building" among TFA groups has developed in the wake of women's human rights (WHR) activists' burn-out and disenchantment with transnational feminist advocacy that targets states and the UN system.[49] A focus on activist learning and movement knowledges might clarify not only whether such a call is a return to a more politicized understanding of transnational (and national) feminist and women's movements, but also how such politico-discursive shifts impact action and knowledge. Or it might explain if, perhaps, the return to "movement building" has already succumbed to more

mainstreaming and neoliberal force. SML analyses of the NGOization processes as they impact particular issues, networks, or groups could make important contributions to TFS and TFA by exploring the role of learning and knowledge practices. Are these practices consciously or unconsciously enacted in the overwriting of grassroots social movement knowledges? What role might a more conscious orientation to activist learning and movement knowledge practices play in resistance to NGOization, including for activists? SML-inflected research would be useful for TFS, a field already suspicious of NGOization (see Bernal & Grewal, 2014), and keenly focused on questions of power/knowledge. It might also help TF advocates resist more consciously the processes of interpellation by newly emerging hegemonic discourses.

For feminist scholars interested in questions of knowledge production in non-academic sites, or the relationship between movement knowledges and academic knowledges, Eyerman and Jamison's early work on cognitive praxis and Jamison's later work on the collective origins of scientific knowledge provide significant empirical and theoretical starting points for research on and theorization of movement knowledges. How or if cognitive praxis functions in TFA is a question which feminist researchers might investigate empirically. Scholars can trace the flow of knowledges and their interactions between movements, between movements and academia, and/or highlighting how specific knowledges might also shed light on questions of discursive appropriation within TFA and TFS. De-homogenizing the constellations of knowledges that are spoken of as either, or both, activist and academic might clarify the risks and benefits of mobilizing particular knowledges–legal, experiential, medical, for example – within broader movement-based knowledge production.

Jamison's historical analysis of the process of appropriating social movement knowledges can inform discussions of the role that knowledge production plays in the

NGOization of TFA. This is something that concerns activists directly, as well as scholars of TFA. Similarly-focused empirical research within the context of TFA would be very valuable and contribute to a grounded discussion of NGOization processes, rather than one that is primarily theoretically informed. TFS must explore how movement-generated knowledges are taken over by powerful institutions, including the academy. Researchers can document the institutional processes of transformation which legitimate appropriated forms of subjugated knowledges as official knowledge and delegitimize other forms of subjugated knowledge. Issues of collective knowledge production in struggle and their citablity are also issues that TFS needs to consider more seriously.

The title of this dissertation seeks to highlight the binary that shapes perceptions of academic and activist work. Academic work is typically seen as expert knowledge production, and is beholden to academic conventions such as ethics reviews, citation and referencing guidelines, blind peer-review, and other checks on its rigor. It is highly citable. Activist knowledge making is often referred to by the term "praxis," implying an organic process of moving back and forth in a mutually informative way between reflection, critical thought, and action grounded in concrete realities. In this way activist knowledge is *sited* or *situated*. Laura Briggs (2008) discusses the difficulties of citing collectively produced movement knowledges and TF scholars Nagar and Swarr (2010) lament the over-emphasis on academic texts of single authorship. There is a crucial tension to explore between the value attributed to academic (single) authorship and the collective generation of movement knowledges. I contend that the implication of different knowledge production processes for the relative "citability" of different forms of knowledge are an important concern that has not been adequately addressed in TFS.

4. Conclusion

Within this dissertation, three sites of knowledge and learning are engaged: TFA, TFS, and SML. If the final product succeeds in convincing the reader of the importance of acknowledging TFA epistemologies and taking TF social movement knowledges on their own terms, then this success will be due to, in part, dialogue between these three knowledge bases. At different moments in the dissertation, I focus on the tensions and complementarity of one dyad or the other: TFA and TFA or SML and TFS.

In this chapter I began with a detailed accounting of my activist positionality, highlighting the learning and unlearning that it occasioned. By describing the type of work that I did, I hope to have provided the reader with a sense of the context of transnational feminist activist knowledge practices in which my own experiential learning unfolded. Much of what I learned in that context made me question North American transnational feminist scholarship, when I later encountered it. In the opening section of this chapter, I stressed that certain obvious issues such as: a) English linguistic imperialism, b) the important role of translation, interpretation, and language learning to the exchange of ideas in multilingual networks; and c) the questions of class and who does what kind of labor in TFA alliances, are rarely addressed in TF academic literature. Hopefully these examples hint at what I call different epistemological routes to transnational feminisms. In recounting the formation of my activist knowledge base, I relied heavily upon my own personal reflections. In the next section of this chapter I drew my own insights into dialogue with the work being done by Social Movement Learning scholars. I pointed towards how some key conceptual tools of SML can deepen an understanding of transnational feminist movement-based knowledge practices and processes. This is true for SML, TFS and ultimately, TFA as well.

Above, I turned to SML scholarship because I believe it does a better job of making such learning visible. I briefly discussed the emergence of the SML framework, then reviewed work on informal learning. I highlighted contributions by key theorists, such as: a) the focus on intentionality and consciousness; b) learners' agency and awareness of the content and processes of learning; c) the context of collective resistance and survival that necessitates learning as an outcome of participation in communities; and d) the contradictory nature of this embedded, incidental learning. The specific conceptual tools of activist informal learning and movement knowledges were also discussed in some detail.

This chapter also suggests that North American TF academic knowledge production can be more effectively decentered by taking transnational feminist activist knowledges on their own terms, or by using conceptual tools from SML to highlight movement based knowledge practices. I believe that SML is the best scholarly framework currently available to account for activist learning and knowledge, and it has yet to be deployed within TFS.[50] There is little risk of overstating the potential for synthesis. Yet, in order to advance my argument, I do not simply produce a case study of TFA with a SML focus on the object of analysis, however promising an approach this might be. Instead, in the next chapters, I proceed more slowly, examining how, actually, the disjuncture that I name at the outset – that between TFA and TFS – emerged. I do so through an analysis of how it was that TF emerged in the NA university without activisms functioning as a touchstone, as has been the case for NA WGS.

The methodological framework that I construct in the next chapter is designed to make this gap between TFA and TFS more visible to scholars. I introduce two methodologies– institutional ethnography (IE) and political activist ethnography (PAE)–which when creatively applied, orient me towards readings the academic literature on TFA by TF scholars as data. In

chapter 5, I will answer the question: How is “transnational feminisms” socially and conceptually organized? So doing, I offer analyses of the academic literature for its preoccupations and lines of inquiry. I also look at how conventional day-to-day scholarly practices orient scholars into particular stances towards TFA/knowledges. I believe this is a necessary step, if the kind of shift in orientation towards TFA and their knowledges for which I argue is to be achieved. This dissertation hopes to persuade the reader that academic knowledge production, if it is to be decentered, must grapple with different and valid epistemologies such as those that operate in social movement contexts.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY: THE CASE FOR READING THE ACADEMIC TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP AS DATA

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY: THE CASE FOR READING THE ACADEMIC TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP AS DATA [51]

Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True, in *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science,* state that "[f]eminist research is both strongly question-oriented and problem focused" (2010, p. 59). They take seriously the argument advanced by Katzenstein and Sil (2008) that research should be question-driven rather than guided by adherence to "particular methods or paradigmatic concerns specific to a particular theoretical perspective or discipline" because such adherence carries the risk that researchers take for granted familiar questions which actually require inquiry (Ackerly & True, 2010, p. 59). The importance of defamiliarization, or asking basic questions about taken-for-granted practices so that we can see them anew, is asserted by Cairns and Sears (2010) to be a central feature of the type of theoretical thinking inherent in the cycle of inquiry that comprises rigorous research. These points resonate with the two main sources of methodological inspiration for my project: Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Political Activist Ethnography (PAE).

A central challenge of my research is the struggle to resist the overwriting of transnational feminist activist knowledges by academic feminist discourses of transnational feminisms within a system of academic knowledge production that demands new research be situated in relation to existing work in the field. I have also struggled with ways in which to document and validate the tacit knowledge that I learned informally while engaged in transnational feminist activism. My informal learning has been the most influential factor that informs my skepticism about NA transnational feminist discourse. Social Movement Learning, introduced in the last chapter, holds promise as an emerging body of scholarship that has managed to take informal learning and movement knowledges more seriously. As such, it would be reasonable to expect my dissertation to move forward into an empirical case study of on-the-

ground transnational feminist activism, using a research framework that integrates the strength of the two fields (TFS and SML). Admittedly, such a direction initially exerted a strong pull. However, as hinted above, I am wary of the lower status accorded to case studies of activism, especially of activisms "elsewhere." A well-executed case study might prove my point about the important learning and intellectual labor that transpires in TFA. However, it would not necessarily reveal for the reader how it came to be that the discourses of transnational feminisms emerged in the NA academy with so little interlocution with, or a sense of accountability to, transnational feminist activists elsewhere. The idea that WGS is grounded in, guided by, and accountable to feminist movements falters as the scope of activisms is transnationalized.

My solution to this problem is not to forego a further exploration of a potential synthesis of key elements of TFS and SML, but to bracket it for a later moment in my argument, when its promise will be more audible (Chapters 7 and 8). The task at hand is to convince the reader that the emerging literature on TF did indeed miss an opportunity to develop in dialogue with TFA and their intellectual, epistemological, and political projects. I want to move my research forward by asking *how* it was that the North American academic literature on TF emerged. This goal is, I believe, best served with an unconventional synthesis of theoretical and methodological insights drawn from Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Political Activists Ethnography (PAE).

The disjuncture addressed by this dissertation is that between different understandings of the term transnational feminisms and their respective epistemological contexts. I want to address this particular disjuncture—my research problem—as inductively as possible. By "inductively," I mean that I attempt to avoid being overly constrained by disciplinary concerns and/or dominant theoretical paradigms, as Ackerly and True (2010) and Dorothy Smith (1987) suggest. Specifically, I think of an inductive research process as one which begins with experience/

observation, looks for patterns, generates a tentative hypothesis, and moves forward to theory building, and then goes back through this cycle again. I contrast this to deductive inquiry which begins *grounded in theory*, generates a hypothesis, examines data or texts for support, confirms or disproves the proposition, and then cycles through this process again.

One challenge of this project is to keep the dominant critical feminist theoretical frameworks of TFS from overwriting my experiential knowledge of TFA. I strive to do so in such a way that my experiential knowledge base remains useful in guiding the lines of questioning that develop, yet that does not imply that my own experiences or learning are somehow representative of the incredibly diverse, contradictory, multi-lingual world of transnational feminist organizing (most of which is certainly beyond my purview).

As such, my original research question centers upon the disjuncture between understandings of transnational feminisms in an open-ended way, so that the lines of inquiry and any subsequent reformulations of my research question are driven primarily in accordance *with the insights emerging from the data analysis*, rather than by ensuring that my lines of inquiry remained relevant to the questions being asked by scholars of TF. The sub-questions that propel this inquiry were developed from application of the methodological tenets described below. These tenets were chosen, in part, because they allowed me to remain grounded in an experiential knowledge base that continues to grate against my growing familiarity with the TFS literature. As will become clear below, this was made possible by shifting my focus to reading the academic feminist literature on TF *as data,* that is, for how it socially and conceptually organizes the emergence of transnational feminisms as an object of academic interest, rather than for the lines of argumentation being advanced in TF scholarly debates.

This methodological framework and the series of interconnected research questions that guide each chapter also developed in response to my growing sense that another case study—a "better" description of what was going on in TFA—would not adequately explain the disjuncture at hand. The interdisciplinary structure of my project implies that, to a certain degree, the insights of social movement learning might solve the problem with TFS that I have identified. Yet, for this "disconnect" between TF academic and activist epistemologies to be effectively addressed, something more than simply convincing TF scholars of the unique contributions of transnational feminist movement knowledges and learning is required.

Methodologically, I needed to find a new way to examine, and later inform, scholarship on TF activisms. I had to discover and explore questions that would target the taken-for-granted practices and orientations that have shaped the current emphases in North American TF scholarship, rather than allowing the TF literature's pre-occupations to shape my research question.[52] The blended methodology used to accomplish this in my dissertation draws upon Institutional Ethnography (IE) and its extension into Political Activist Ethnography (PAE), as well as a few key elements of Grounded Theory. All of these approaches share a concern with: a) inductive generation of analysis/theory, b) avoiding being overly constrained by disciplinary concerns, and c) an emphasis on specific reading practices.

1. Institutional Ethnography (IE)

Dorothy Smith pioneered the methodology known as Institutional Ethnography. It is a way to study "the social organization of knowledge" wherein knowledge is approached "as something taking place in the actual social organization among people, in the social relations" rather than a "traditional sociology of knowledge where knowledge was treated as something separate from the social which was then to be related to the social" (Quoted in Widerberg, 2004,

para 4). D. Smith's influential early works, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987) and *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge* (1990) outline a radical re-thinking of sociological inquiry. She exposes the ways in which women's everyday life experiences were shaped by decisions made in institutional contexts, usually by men, through what she referred to as extra-local apparatus of ruling. She also offers a powerful model of "reflexive inquiry" wherein "what we make … an object of investigation is what we ourselves are immersed in" (1990, p. 4). In studying activist learning and knowledge practices, I have moved from a context of immersion in such organizing, to a context in which knowledge is produced *about* such TFA organizing.

D. Smith's methodological innovations have been taken up in a number of ways by others who have extended her work. Some of these efforts remain under the umbrella of IE, such as the accessible IE methodological primer co-authored by Marie Campbell and Francis Gregor (2004). Political Activist Ethnography is a different extension of Institutional Ethnography, one which seeks to apply IE insights in a way which can guide activist struggles with authorities and state institutions. PAE was improvised by George Smith, a student of Dorothy Smith's (2006). According to G. Smith, PAE is a methodology that seeks to produce "scientific," "empirical" knowledge to inform activist confrontations with ruling regimes (2006, p. 53). It is different from other forms of activist scholarship in important ways which will be discussed below.

While I do not conceive of this dissertation as an Institutional Ethnography or Political Activist Ethnography *per se*, my project's methodology and theoretical framework is inspired by these approaches. My project shares some main concerns with IE and PAE: "[l]ooking at how people participate in discourse, how they talk about what they do, what texts they circulate, and what is reproduced in people's labor, is of utmost analytic interest in institutional and political

activist ethnography" (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 610). The methodology for my project has been designed by using key IE and PAE principles to guide the research process. First, I begin with an experience of disjuncture: a clash between my own experiential knowledge of (a particular context of) TFA and the academic scholarship on "Transnational Feminisms." This is used as an entry point for my inquiry. Second, I identify some of the social relations shaping this disjuncture by asking: "how is this problem socially organized?" Third, I bracket the institutional, theoretical, and disciplinary overwriting of experiential accounts/members' knowledge. I then proceed to answer a refined version of the research question by conducting a textual analysis of key academic texts, read as data. In so doing, I am following Campbell and Gregor's (2004) suggestions for textual analysis. The research continues to unfold inductively from that point onwards. Below I outline these principles, their origins, and how I have reworked them into a blended IE/PAE methodological framework for this study. I will discuss four main methodological tenets.

2. Four Methodological Tenets Drawn from Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Political Activist Ethnography (PAE)

2.1 First Tenet: Start with an Experience of Disjuncture or a Rupture of Consciousness as an Entry Point

Institutional ethnographer Dorothy Smith was trained conventionally, as a sociologist, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, earning her PhD at the beginning of what feminists refer to as the Second Wave. She credits the women's movement and women generally as a source of dialogue and insight that informed her innovative approach. Much North American feminist scholarship acknowledges the definitive influence of remaining in dialogue with social movements. D. Smith's (1987) early interventions were initially designed to create a sociology

for women, specifically from the standpoint of women's place in the "everyday world," a world in which women are "located physically and socially" and that "we experience directly" (p.89). The location of women's stance in the everyday world was understood by D. Smith to be outside of the sphere of ruling relations. Relations of ruling are located in "the intersection of the institutions organizing and regulating society" and reference relations of class, state, and gender (p.3). D. Smith advances an analysis of power, wherein "ruling" refers to "a complex of organized practices, including government, law, business and financial management, professional organization, and educational institutions as well as discourses in texts that interpenetrate the multiple sites of power" (p.3).

For D. Smith, articulating women's standpoint in the everyday world was both a starting point of inquiry and an instance of political alignment with those working to improve women's lives. In her thinking at the time, the everyday world of women was often removed from sites of institutional power, a male world in which social relations were found, upon her examination, to be largely textually mediated. D. Smith noticed that institutional documents coordinated people's activities so that similar social experiences re-occurred in different times and places. In articulating "the everyday world as problematic[,]" Smith innovated "an organization of inquiry that begins where women *actually are* and addresses the problem of how our everyday worlds are put together in relations that are not wholly discoverable within the everyday world" (1987, p. 47). She turned her attention to institutional sites and texts that played a role in coordinating women's everyday experiences.

As a scholar and single mother of two, D. Smith experienced in her own day-to-day life a sense of tension or disjuncture between her worlds. She was particularly committed to starting inquiry from such a sense of disjuncture or a rupture of consciousness, between experiential and

ruling knowledges. From a particular disjuncture, she moves outwards to explore its extra-local and trans-local social organization. She explains that women's everyday experiences cannot be fully understood in terms of their local context only, "as the nature of our experience is organized by relations tying it into larger processes in the world as well as by locally organized practices" (D. Smith, 1987, p.10). Importantly, she was not primarily concerned with documenting women's experiences of disjuncture and/or their everyday worlds for its own sake. Extending D. Smith's work, G. Smith (2006), explains that experiences of disjuncture point to fault lines because they expose a tension between everyday experiential understandings of the world and the ideological operations of what he referred to as politico-administrative regimes, or bureaucratic and administrative state institutions.

For both D. Smith and G. Smith, disjuncture points the way forward into inquiry. For example, in a research study conducted by Marie Campbell (2006), the lack of the promised continuity of home care experienced by disabled people was the experience of disjuncture that launched the inquiry. Continuity of care was promised by the social service agency, and for disabled people requiring these services, having the same person regularly attend to their care was a key concern. Campbell studies how this experience of a lack of promised continuity was organized. She discovered that schedulers had to consider transportation time between clients, as well as seniority when drawing up workers' schedules, and that these concerns overrode the priorities of disabled clients whose preferences might have meant higher costs and violation of the principle of seniority. In this way, Campbell documents not what the experience of home care is like, but *how it is organized by reference to texts* such as collective agreements, in institutional contexts removed from the home environment.

Political activist ethnographers also position themselves and their research in solidarity with marginalized people and activists (see examples in Frampton, Kinsman, Thompson, & Tilleczek, 2006). G. Smith extends the starting point of inquiry from women's standpoint, to that of any people outside of ruling regimes (2006, p. 48), and explicitly to activists engaged in confrontation with what D. Smith called "ruling regimes" and what G. Smith called "politico-administrative regimes" (G. Smith, 2006, p. 57). For G. Smith, confrontation with state, administrative, and institutional power guided the research process because the "analysis is directed at empirically determining how such regimes work" (2006, p. 49). G. Smith explicitly articulates PAE not as activism, or a study of activism, but as research "*for* activists" (p. 44). G. Smith follows D. Smith in terms of starting inquiry from a position "outside" of a politico-administrative regime, yet not as a participant observer in a conflict. As he explains: "a Marxist-feminist ethnographer must start in a reflexive fashion from inside the social organization of not only her own world but by extension the social world she intends to investigate" (p. 57). As an HIV-positive gay activist conducting research during the early days of the AIDS crisis, G. Smith understood himself to occupy a position outside of ruling relations. As he conducted his research alongside fellow activists fighting for access to new and experimental treatment, G. Smith discovered that part of the reason that new drugs and treatments were unavailable was that there was no institutional infrastructure mandated to expedite access to clinic trials. Rather, prevention and public health approaches were in place, leaving HIV-positive peoples' health needs unattended to. By following AIDS activists' lines of confrontation with the health care infrastructure, he was able to highlight the actual practices, policies, and institutional mandates which needed to be addressed in order to access experimental drugs more quickly. He was both outside and inside contexts of ruling at various moments, and used the disjuncture between the

health needs of HIV positive people and what the Canadian state was (not) offering to guide both his research and, ultimately, activist demands.

2.1.1 My application of the first tenet. My project starts in these two positions simultaneously: from my own activist standpoint (in another time and place), as well as from my current position as a member of the North American academy pursuing doctoral studies on TF. I approach both of these starting points in terms of the "material and concrete circumstances of peoples' lives" (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 611). There is a tension between these two worlds and their ways of knowing, which informs the research focus. I take as my entry point the disjuncture between my encounter with two "transnational feminisms." The first was my experiential learning in Japan-based transnational feminist activist organizing around women's human rights tribunals in East Asia in the 1990s. The second was my encounter with Anglo-American academic discourse of transnational feminisms beginning in 2004, when I entered graduate school in Montréal. In keeping with the emphasis in IE, experiential knowledge is considered an important resource, but not definitive. In this dissertation, I explore how this disjuncture is shaped, in part, by the knowledge-production practices of TF scholars.

I diverge from the suggestions above in that this project is not aligned with a specific group of oppressed people or with activists in struggle *per se*. Activists are not presumed to be a marginalized group oppressed by the academy; though I do think many of their insights are ignored, appropriated, and unattributed. Academics are not presumed to be dupes of their institutions either**.** If I am on the side of anything, it is on the side of an orientation towards valuing struggle as important means and site of learning, transformation, and resistance. I do not misunderstand this dissertation as activist scholarship, nor as relevant to movement activists. It is primarily a study of academic TF knowledge production practices and texts, and secondly, an

interdisciplinary exploration of what consciously shifting orientations to activist knowledges might accomplish for TFS. I draw upon my own experiential learning, Social Movement Learning scholarship, and the theoretical implications of IE and PAE methodologies in order to think through this question of orientations towards movement knowledges.

2.2 Second Tenet: Identifying Social Relations as the Object of Study by Asking: "How is this Problem Socially Organized?"

The object of inquiry in D. Smith's approach is not experiences themselves but how they are socially organized. George Smith applauds D. Smith for this differently feminist epistemological shift from an objective understanding of experiential knowledge to a reflexive one (rather than to a subjective one, as other feminists had advocated) (2006, p. 51). G. Smith understands reflexivity in a Marxist sense, as does D. Smith, emphasizing that knowledge of the world is mutually produced through action in the social world. This resonates with understandings of knowledge as practice. Campbell and Gregor explain that social relations and social organization are conceptual tools that help the researcher understand how some particular aspect of life is organized:

> If we have the concept 'social organization' we are able to use it to recognize that people's actions are coordinated and concerted by something beyond their own motivations and intentions. Using the concept of 'social relations' is another step in understanding concerted action. Smith proposes that social relations are actual practices and activities through which people's lives are socially organized. (2004, p.30)

Social relations are thus realized in practices, that is, "people actively constitute" social relations (Campbell and Gregor, 2004, p. 31). Dorothy Smith accomplishes this focus on social relations

by asking: "how is X socially organized?" She also highlights at the important role of texts in shaping extra-local social relations.

Political Activist Ethnography shares with Institutional Ethnography the emphasis on concretely explicating social relations. G. Smith explains that he takes social relations as his analytic or objects of study. Social relations are "used not to reference a world, but to orient to it, in the sense in which language conveys the intention (i.e. relevancies) of the user"[53] (2006, p.54). This emphasis on *orientations towards objects of inquiries* informs my project methodologically, as well as theoretically. I use the language of "orientations towards transnational feminist activisms and their knowledges" to highlight what emerges in my study as an important variable. By then asking basic questions about conventional scholarly knowledge production practices — specifically the use of activists' ideas and texts by scholars of transnational feminisms as resources or data — these taken for granted engagements are made less familiar and become visible as orientations towards transnational feminist activist knowledges and texts that are socially and conceptually organized. If unattended to, such scholarly orientations, and their manifestation in taken-for-granted day-to-day academic knowledge practices, can reproduce the disjuncture and the overwriting of movement knowledges which I seek to address. G. Smith's approach seeks to make concrete contributions to activism by developing an analysis of politico-administrative regimes—bureaucratic and administrative state institutions—through the social relations of confrontation. Doing so is a way of accessing their operations and logics. Throughout, G. Smith, too, grounds his analysis in asking how a particular experience is organized. In other words, he focuses on the social relations that produce a particular situation.

2.2.1 My application of the second tenet. There are two components to explain regarding my application of this methodological principle. They are: a) identifying social relations as an object of study, and b) asking how a given experience is organized.

Identifying social relations as an object of study. The first point pertains to the definition of an object of study. The researcher has to first direct her focus away from documenting or analyzing an experiential account and shift her attention towards the social organization of that experience. Then she must ask, concretely: *how* is X socially organized? In terms of identifying my object of study, what I take from PAE is the shift in orientation *away from* activisms, activists, or their practices *as an object of research*. However, I turn my attention, not to the production of knowledge *for* activists, as George Smith and many activist-scholars compellingly suggest (See Hale, 2008; Frampton et al, 2006). Instead, in seeking to understand the epistemological disjuncture between transnational feminist activisms and Transnational Feminist Studies, I make some key aspects of *the social and conceptual organization of this misfit* my object of inquiry.

D. Smith, reflecting on the development of her methodology, says:

> I then saw something I do want to hold on to—but which is difficult to hold on to—which is the idea that you can discover a great deal about the social as you discover *your own practices, from the inside*." [emphasis added] (Quoted in Widerberg, 2004, para 13).

This was a complicated shift for me, one which felt counter-intuitive after years of focusing on the transnational feminist knowledge production processes and practices inherent in women's activist movements. However, as I was no longer active in transnational feminist organizing, within my research I needed to attend to my current social location. As a graduate student in a Canadian university, it was within the North American academic context that the disjuncture

between academic and activist epistemologies had become increasingly apparent and troublesome. The starting point for my dissertation was not the same starting point for my doctoral studies, almost a decade earlier. Nor were my positionality or everyday practices similar. My research focus was no longer an explication of the pedagogical nature of transnational feminist organizing, which would have required a focus on the social relations of activist knowledge production through fieldwork. Instead, I adopted the disjuncture or misfit between TFA and TFS as my focus. Concretely, this demanded that I define as my object of study some aspects of the social and conceptual organization of North American TF academic knowledge production about transnational feminist activisms.

Feminists have long grappled with the politics of academic knowledge production and its relationship to activism. They have pushed back in various ways: with collaborative knowledge-production efforts and movement-engaged knowledge-production efforts. Yet, encountering TFS, I felt an uneasiness that I first attributed to the under- or misrepresentation of TFA in the literature. Through learning how to read TF academic literature for what it says about the social organization of scholarly engagement with *transnational feminist activisms* (through the data analysis presented in Chapter 5), I came to focus upon a second concern. This second object of inquiry — the organization of a scholarly stance/orientation towards activists and *their knowledges in particular* — helped me to clarify my earlier misgivings. This shift away from simply focusing on how scholars relate to activism was accompanied by a shift away from the desire to see a "better representation" of TFA as a solution. Another case study of activism did not seem likely to solve the problem I had chosen to explore, even if it successfully captured some of the specificities that were poorly represented in the North American academic TF

discourse. This is how the social organization of TF scholarly knowledge production—especially as it pertains to TFA and their knowledges — became my object of inquiry.

Asking how is this experience organized? The second task of this tenet is to ask this central research question. This question orients the researcher towards social relations and social organization. My analysis moves forward by asking: "how is the disjuncture between TFA and TFS socially and conceptually organized?" not "why does this tension exist?"[54] As Bisaillon explains of IE/PAE, "[a] guiding assumption is that ideas and concepts are produced through people's material practices" (2012, p. 610). Accordingly, I examine TFS texts to trace the impact of day-to-day academic knowledge producing practices. In so doing, I am not interested in advancing an argument for understanding the university as a politico-administrative regime. However, I do think that the university is an institution in which normative rules about knowledge production exert a tremendous influence on the repression and devaluation of insurgent forms of knowledge and experiential learning. As Campbell and Gregor explain: "[p]eople participate in social relations, often unknowingly, as they act competently and knowledgeably to concert and coordinate their own actions with professional standards or family expectations or organizational rules" (2004, p. 31). In this project, I explore how North American based scholars communicate about transnational feminist activisms, by examining textual evidence of how the academic discourses of transnational feminisms emerged. Within this process, I believe that conventional — and even subversive — scholarly practices have tended to recenter the North American academy as the exemplar of "objective," professionalized knowledge production. This inadvertent overshadowing of TFA knowledge practices results in part, I believe, from the conscientious production of critical scholarship according to mandatory and conventional scholarly knowledge production practices. Transnational feminist scholarship

will be explored as "a way of knowing the world from within textually coordinated accounts of happenings" that tends to "supplant" lived experiential knowledge, or what an Institutional Ethnographer would call "official or authoritative knowledge" (Bisaillon, 2012, p. 616).

What is involved in asking "how"? As the importance of inductively answering *how* emerged in the early phase of my research, I paused to think through what it meant to ask "*how* is this problem organized?" I understand *how* to refer to the processes, means, agencies, methods, and practices by or through which something transpires. I knew that I wanted to trace the conceptual and material effects of the texts and practices I studied. As I worked towards shifting my focus to asking *how* transnational feminisms was socially organized, the nuances of social and conceptual organization became more evident. This lead to thinking through a series of related questions which directed my analysis towards the "*hows*"— the processes, practices, agency, method, and means of TFS. Some questions which I use to understand the "how" of social and conceptual organization are listed below. They inform data analysis in the following two chapters on the relationship between TFS and TFA.

Asking "how" highlights…	Via	…and leads me to…
Practices	actions, activities	Publications on TF/TFA, conferences on TF/TFA, talks on TF/TFA, courses on TF/TFA, joint research projects, job openings with specialization in TF
Process	(sequential) steps towards a finished product	Publications: data collection, theorizing, reading relevant academic texts, compiling reference lists, citations, editing, submission of articles, vetting, publication Conferences: brainstorming, drafting and disseminating calls for papers (CFP), searching for venue, selection and invitation of keynote speakers, selecting presenters, scheduling conference, hosting conferences, etc.
Agency	people? (roles? identities?)	Who is involved? Academics, activists, artists,

	motivations? locations (positionality, geographic, institutional) Institutional and group affiliations?	graduate students, undergraduate students, editors, publishers, curriculum committees, hiring committees, academic associations, funding agencies, etc. Institutional affiliations: university, community group, research institute, NGO, INGO, UN, GO, funding bodies, scholarly associations, activist groups
Method	methodologies, research methods, epistemologies	Transnational, feminist, antiracist, intersectional, anti-capitalist, critical, liberal, standpoint, etc.
Means	Resources including financial resources, systems, medium, instruments, avenues, instrument/alities, wherewithal	Funding, access to technology, work-life balance, etc.

Considering these sub-questions of asking how — that is specifying relevant *processes, practices, agencies, methods,* and *means* — directed my analysis towards certain taken-for-granted practices and texts of academic life. This "broad strokes" approach to thinking about the practices and texts that contributed to the emergence of transnational feminisms suggests that there is a series of traceable texts and practices which show that this process occurred during the emergence of "Transnational Feminisms" in the North American academy. I argue that texts such as calls for papers (CFPs), volumes of collected essays, and job advertisements act as conceptual and social organizers, and as *field-building mechanisms* in the emergence of TFS. It was only once these "how" questions re-oriented my thinking, to allow me to see the actual taken-for-granted practices that produced North American discourses of transnational feminisms, that I was able to understand how the kinds of transnational feminist activist knowledge production that I had witnessed and experienced firsthand as an activist, were marginalized, ignored, overwritten, or subsumed. I was able to see how TFAK were instrumentalized, operationalized, and domesticated by feminist scholars in order to advance academic inquiry into

the "transnational" or TF. This instrumentalization and overwriting of activist knowledges occurred as an (almost) necessary function of scholars fulfilling their job requirements. With regards to publications, for example, these requirements include: situating new research with reference to pre-existing academic research, citing key texts and thinkers in a discipline or field, consulting activist texts as primary material or data, and so on.[55]

By making the social relations of academic knowledge production on transnational feminisms my object of inquiry, and exploring how the emergence of transnational feminisms was organized through a series of taken-for-granted academic practices, I was able to see more clearly how orientations to activist knowledges were over-determined by conventional scholarly practices, and how TF activist knowledges were often subjugated through the research process. While I believe that the full range of academic texts play a role in shaping the emergence and direction of TF, I limit myself to the academic literature that would normally function as secondary material, rather than more conventionally, in an IE sense, studying job ads and CFPs as primary materials. The next methodological tenet offers a way to resist the overwriting of activist knowledge by naming and defamiliarizing in scholarly research conventions.

2.3 Third Tenet: Bracketing: Resisting the Institutional, Theoretical, Ideological, Speculative, and Disciplinary Overwriting of Experiential Accounts/Members' Knowledge

D. Smith explains the emergence of the research question that she uses, i.e. "how is X organized?":

> When I went on to look at the social organization of knowledge as an empirical issue, I asked How is it done, how is it actually organized? [sic] That way you can treat knowledge as something independent of us – and not only as something he or she knows – so as to answer questions like:

> How is it that that category makes sense? How is it that there are some distinctive forms of organization that we can treat as if they have an overriding relationship to what we might know as individuals? (Quoted in Widerberg, 2004, para 12)

I wanted to know how the academic discourse of transnational feminisms has come to make sense, generally, and, especially, within literature that addressed transnational feminist activisms, when it was without a strong presence or engagement of actual activists' own knowledges. I was troubled by the lack of attention within the TF literature towards the complicated analyses being advanced by transnational feminist activist alliances on-the-ground. I had gained members' knowledge experientially, which helped me to resist the flattening of complex and contradictory relationships of transnational feminism activisms as they were discussed in classrooms and conferences.

Institutional ethnographers want to avoid ideological ruling perspectives overwriting experiential accounts, or members' knowledge. Methodologically, beginning research from women's standpoint in the everyday world as "outside the text" (1987, p.47) meant that D. Smith was particularly concerned that research on women *not* begin with questions drawn from disciplinary foci. She particularly rejected the insistence that inquiry "must begin with the conceptual apparatus or theory drawn from the discipline," which she believed were often part and parcel of the ruling apparatus vis-à-vis women (p. 89). D. Smith elaborates:

> since the procedures, methods, and aims of present sociology give primacy to the concepts, relevancies, and topics of the [conventional, sexist] sociological discourse, we cannot begin from within that frame. This would be to extend the hegemony of the discourse over the actualities of the everyday experience of the world. (p.89)

In D. Smith's view, sociological research supported ruling relations and was tainted by sexist and capitalist values. Other feminist scholars such as Ackerley and True, whose quotation opens this chapter, are similarly concerned with disciplinary and theoretical frames over-determining researchers' agendas, because they can tilt research production in particular directions (2010, p.59).

G. Smith concurs with D. Smith regarding the importance of eschewing the normative disciplinary lens, a move which he traces back to Marx's social ontology: "[w]hat the sociologist who wishes to investigate [Marx's] "human sensuous activity" [practice] must avoid is the laying on of an objective or conceptual framework as a method of understanding" (2006, p. 56). He referred to this bracketing of disciplinary knowledge by the term "materialist epoché": a technique "whereby both political and sociological theory were bracketed so that [I] had to make sense of settings on their own terms" (p. 56, 65). This bracketing of theoretical and disciplinary explanations is what I refer to as a "more inductive" methodology.

In developing PAE *for* activists, G. Smith worked from this members' knowledge that political action grounded in political or sociological theory often "misfired" or worse "backfired" (p.68). He argued that informing action with the results of answering a *why*-question, particularly with theoretical, idealist, ideological, or speculative answers can misdirect or defuse resistance. Instead he advocated what he termed a "scientific" means to political organizing and resistance; by scientific here he means empirical and materialist, not idealist (2006, p.68). Causal, ideological, and speculative explanations of the sort that answer the question *why* are bracketed. Instead, the researcher conducts a close examination of the *how*: or the means by which social life is organized. Importantly, G. Smith extends the bracketing injunctive to activists' ideological and speculative explanations as well. G. Smith did not want material circumstances obfuscated

by activists' own analyses or by their political and ideological commitments. This was not because he rejected their analyses, but rather because he believed empirical investigations of material circumstances of conflict and institutional texts would provide better direction to activists' efforts to resist oppressive practices and structures.

Clearly, G. Smith is not the first researcher to aspire to help activists to do better work. His originality and relevance lie in his ability to effectively demonstrate through his own research for activists the advantages of: 1) asking "how is X socially organized?" and 2) bracketing activists' own "speculative" explanations. His approach follows lines of conflict to analyze how a particular instance of oppression is actually organized, rather than beginning with a theoretical or speculative view. This leads to targeted strategies that are more likely to result in institutional and policy change and therefore to influence peoples' everyday/everynight lives. A clear example that illustrates his point is the research which he conducted into a series of gay bath house raids in Toronto (2006, p. 51-2). G. Smith contrasts an idealist analysis of the cause of the problem, i.e. the activists' view that part of the problem was caused by the homophobia of the police, with his materialist approach that inquires into how, actually, police are permitted to raid bath houses. By so doing, he arrived at the actual legislation (Bawdy House Law) that allowed the raids to take place. Challenging that legislation then became a strategy for activists. This is quite different from the strategies suggested by the conclusion that the police are homophobic, which might be taken to imply, for example, mandatory sensitivity-training workshops as a solution to homophobia. The concrete implications for relevant, targeted action are one of the gifts of G. Smith's careful re-thinking of research methodology.

2.3.1 My application of the third tenet. From the above discussion, I will address two main issues that are of concern for my project. The first is the practice of bracketing ruling

perspectives, as well as disciplinary foci and available conceptual frameworks. The second issue is the tension between D. Smith's and G. Smith's concerns about which perspectives threaten to overwrite which alternative accounts. D. Smith highlights the fault line between experiential accounts and disciplinary, ruling, or authoritative, official accounts. G. Smith suggests that in PAE, activists' own accounts too must be bracketed. While D. Smith would not have accorded women's/activists' accounts a status exempt from scrutiny, she was concerned that they not be overwritten by ruling or disciplinary perspectives in the research process. The disjuncture between everyday and ruling perspectives was the rich terrain D. Smith mined for entry points into research. G. Smith, on the other hand, raises concerns about the oppositional analyses generated in movement contexts, when they are idealist (meaning conceptually generated) and not necessarily empirically linked to the actual practices and events which are giving rise to the problem activists are challenging. G. Smith extends the range of perspectives which threaten to overwrite alternative accounts by looking not at whose accounts they are, but at how they are arrived at. G. Smith shows that even activists' own accounts can subjugate alternative materialist understandings which might better inform activism.

D. Smith's concern with the hegemony of academic disciplinary concerns overwriting the actual experiences of the everyday world resonates with me. However, we are concerned with different manifestations of this problem. D. Smith was resisting the hegemony of conventional sociology because she saw sociological inquiry aligned with a ruling stance vis-à-vis women. She refers to this as a "problem of knowing" structured by capitalist and patriarchal institutions: "[s]kills and knowledge embedded in relations among particular persons have been displaced by externalizing forms of formal organization or discourse mediated by texts" (D. Smith, 1990, p. 5).

What concerns me is a similar but different problem of knowing. I am concerned with disciplinary lines of inquiry that recenter North American TF academic discourses at the expense of transnational activist intellectual work done in far-flung movement contexts, and outside of direct relationships with Western activist alliances and networks. I do not mean to imply that all academic feminist research is necessarily aligned with neoliberal, capitalist, sexist, racist, and colonialist ruling perspectives. Certainly some feminist scholarship and activism may well be influenced by these hegemonic ideologies, even unwittingly, and the neoliberal restructuring of the university has raised serious concerns about how feminist work can bolster ruling perspectives (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey, 2009; Bouchard, 2012; Swarr and Nagar, 2010). The ways in which what James Scott (1998) calls "seeing like a state" infiltrates scholarship is not straightforward, simplistic, or intentional (see Fernandes, 2013 for an excellent extended analysis of this point). However, much of the scholarship that I focus upon is consciously opposed to and critical of such ruling perspectives. So, to be clear, I am not implying, as D. Smith rightly did with sociology at the time, that it is because transnational feminist scholarship is aligned with ruling interests that I must start my inquiry from a different vantage point.

My concern with bracketing disciplinary foci stems from a concern that academic work on transnational feminisms seems to subordinate activist informal learning and knowledge production to academic analyses. I believe that academic feminist discourses about transnational feminisms, even those which are critical, can overwrite the actual cross-border intellectual and political work, *particularly work by (Southern) non-Anglophone women activists*. I hope to convince the reader that such discourses also perhaps unwittingly recenter North American positionality vis-à-vis what counts as "transnational feminism" and *who* produces transnational feminist knowledges.

I have applied D. Smith's bracketing principle by starting my research from questions that arose for me upon transitioning from activist work in Japan and Asia to feminist graduate studies at an English university in Québec. I did not develop my research question from a (citational) literature review of the existing academic TF/S. My own scholarly standpoint while "located physically and socially" in Québec educational institutions remains deeply informed by experiential learning in Japan and Asian feminist transnational activist milieu. However, at the same time, I am undeniably influenced by the ideological and epistemological challenge posed by critical feminist, antiracist, and postcolonial TF scholars, and I am committed to similar visions of social justice. So, it bears asking: why would I seek to bracket the very perspectives which have been so important to my own learning in academic contexts?

In response, I maintain that an uncomfortable risk of contemporary academic transnational feminist scholarship is that theory or critique can overwrite TF activists' own descriptive, narrative, and experiential accounts (oral and textual), as well as their intellectual work. In other places, I have challenged this overwriting by sharing anecdotes which demonstrate how my own experiential learning in transnational feminist activists' contexts has enabled me to critique the academic scholarship (Lunny, 2006). However, I must stress that in so doing I do not intend to imply that my own, individual, tacit knowledge is somehow representative of the vast complicated multi-lingual intellectual and political projects of TFA. My informal learning is a product of a specific and bounded engagement in TFA. By experiencing firsthand the heterogeneity of transnational feminist activist knowledges and epistemologies through Asian regional transnational feminist activist organizing, I acquired tacit knowledge that enables me to question how these TFA knowledges are represented in

transnational feminist scholarship. It is a resource that I can draw upon, and one that points to different epistemological routes through the terrain of TF.

I refer to the lessons drawn from my experiential learning in part because one of the goals of this dissertation is to resist the overwriting of experiential and activist knowledges by disciplinary accounts, and to make visible the learning and knowledge production embedded in movement struggles, transnational advocacy networks, and activism. This is part of a series of efforts I make within this dissertation to question conventional and subversive academic knowledge production practices. However, all experiential knowledge, all individual accounts, are still socially located, and as likely as any to be interpellated by, and complicit with hegemonic perspectives. Activist accounts, especially in the era of NGOization, can be complicit with ruling relations, or as G. Smith argues, can be speculative and diversionary. I contend that critical feminist theories, too, run such risks. In my own view, for scholars working in North American universities, there is no unimplicated stance outside of ruling relations, no matter how oppositional or critical one's position is. Antiracist and postcolonial feminists would certainly argue that not just relations of ruling, but relations of resistance, too, are shot through with oppressive power relations. Thus, within this dissertation, I apply G. Smith's insight about bracketing activists' own speculative accounts in the sense that even the most compelling analyses of our own or of our allies — academic and activist — still needs to be measured against their substantive and material practices and effects. Still, I do not conduct a political activist ethnography. PAE methodological insights influence my approach to the academic literature. The framework of PAE functions theoretically beyond my choice of methods and object of analysis.

2.4 Fourth Tenet: Conducting a Textual Analysis: Reading the Transnational Feminist Academic Literature as Data and for its Social Organization

The institutional ethnographer's arsenal of methods includes interviews, archival research, textual analysis of institutional documents, and observation. For PAE, G. Smith gathered data through a wide range of practices that followed the lines of confrontation with authorities. This included analyzing institutional documents, media accounts, letterhead, and briefs, as well as analyzing face-to-face encounters, such as meetings, events, and casual conversations (2006, p. 61). The combined insights of Institutional Ethnography and Political Activist Ethnography guide the researcher to read institutional and other texts *not for only their meaning but for how they organize people's lives and actions*. Texts are believed to "activate"—or socially organize—people's actions. "[W]hat people do with texts[,]" or people's textual practices, are an important research focus (Bisaillon, 2012, p.620). G. Smith explains that in his PAE studies he read texts in two ways. First, institutional texts are read for their "intended meaning," (2006, p.65); second, documents are read for *how they coordinate people's activities*. G. Smith elaborates:

> To recover the ontological properties of documents it is necessary to read them not for their meaning as such, although this is important, but for how they organize people's lives. This meant examining how the language of documents operates as a conceptual coordinator of social action (p. 63).

In practice this is difficult to do, as G. Smith notes, "[n]eedless to say, it involved an acquired ability to 'see' organization in…the text of institutional documents" (p. 65). This idea of how texts act as conceptual coordinators is important in my project.

Campbell and Gregor counsel institutional ethnographers to consider carefully the stance which they take vis-à-vis the academic literature, and stress the importance of "maintain[ing] the research interest in the social organization of the topic" and, importantly, of the literature itself (2004, p.51–2). I adapt the unique approach to textual analysis developed in IE and PAE. This focus on developing a conscious stance towards academic literature is a method I used to conduct my research, but as the research progressed, it emerged as a theoretically important insight as well. Reading academic literature *as data* was an important approach that enabled me to shift my focus from the place of activisms within TFS to the place of activist *knowledges* therein. The organization of scholarly stances or orientations towards movement knowledges and texts therefore became a central focus of my research.

2.4.1 My application of the fourth tenet: learning to shift my orientation to theory. The above insights into the role of texts in constituting social relations have influenced my approach. As I am currently located in a North American academic environment, my main source of information about transnational feminist activist knowledges is now textual. The loss of experiential day-to-day engagement with other activists alters my positionality, my accountability, and limits my understanding, quite profoundly. As my research focus shifted from the initial intent to document and analyze TF activist knowledge production and learning practices, I searched for a method that would help guide me towards an inductive exploration of the academic literature. By inductive, I emphasize that I wanted to begin my research with my own "observations," members' knowledge (experiential learning, tacit knowledge of TFA), rather than beginning from a theoretical framework, which I considered to be a more deductive approach. I initially wondered: how is it that academic feminists have taken so long to engage seriously with transnational feminist activism as a particularly relevant site of knowledge

production? Convinced by IE's discovery of the role documents play in coordinating peoples' actions in institutional settings, I then asked: how are the everyday practices of TF feminist scholars' intellectual work socially or conceptually coordinated? The impact of *scholarship itself* in coordinating scholars' relationships to transnational feminist activisms is undeniable, if so taken-for-granted as not to warrant scrutiny from the angle that I propose. Specifically, I wondered: how were North American-based feminist scholarly relationships with and orientations towards activism socially and conceptually organized as "transnational feminisms" emerged? I chose my approach to data collection and analysis in order to ascertain which texts and practices might organize the research approaches of scholars of Transnational Feminisms, especially towards transnational feminist activisms and their knowledges. As the research moved forward, I began to ask: how can a textual analysis help me to uncover the practices that inform how TF scholars relate (or not) to TFA *and their knowledges*?

The IE/PAE method which I use is "textual analysis," yet the texts which I have chosen to examine are not the type of documents that institutional ethnographers typically analyze. A conventional institutional ethnographer addressing my topic would likely look to, in the first instance, institutional texts such as job descriptions, collective agreements, research ethics guidelines, funding regulations, vision statements, curriculum, or departmental minutes, for clues as to how relevant academic practices are organized. Yet, because of the focus of my question and because of my analysis of what it means to ask "how" (see chart above), I proceeded differently. I considered the range of texts produced regularly through the everyday practices of educators and researchers in academic posts: job descriptions, course outlines, calls for papers, publications, funding applications, and other scholarly texts. While all of these are potentially

revealing sources, I decided that I wanted to explore the social and conceptual organization of transnational feminisms through *the academic literature itself*.

I take seriously the injunction not to let disciplinary concerns override my own experiential activist knowledge base and so I turned to another inductive methodology to enhance my textual analysis: Grounded Theory (GT). One of GTs founders, Barney Glaser, maintains that "all is data" (2001, p. 145). This resonated with Campbell and Gregor's suggestion that academic literature reviews should be approached as any other textual analysis (2004, p. 50-4). Reflecting upon how my own transition to the academy had made textual encounters with TFA more prevalent than face-to-face encounters led me to think about the important role such encounters play in academic contexts. For this reason, I conduct a textual analysis of the North American English language TF *academic* literature *as data*. What this means for my project will become clearer as my argument unfolds.

The analysis of TFS literature presented in Chapter 5 was conducted by reading the texts for key concepts and the predominant concerns and lines of inquiry evident in the scholarly work on Transnational Feminisms (TF). I did this to ascertain some of the logics and practices by which TF was emerging in the North American academic literature, as a frame distinct from International Feminisms and Global Feminisms, and as one which seemed to be headed towards becoming a sub-field of inquiry *per se*. This differs from a conventional literature review which seeks to provide an overview and analysis of a particular body of literature as it *pertains to a question set by the researcher* (Randolph, 2009). Feminist social scientists, such as True and Ackerly (2010), grounded theorists, and institutional ethnographers, are wary of researchers becoming tainted by concepts, categories, and concerns of a field of literature or the hegemonic workings of ideological interpretations that trump experiential accounts. GT handles this

problem by suggesting that literature reviews be done only after the data analysis and inductive generation of concepts and categories is complete. IE instead suggests one begin with an account of experience and then look into how it is socially organized and textually mediated, rather than analyze the experience itself. Charmaz offers a useful GT approach whereby texts are "objects for analytic scrutiny" not tools for "corroborating evidence" or presumably confirming hypotheses (2006, p.39).

In conducting the inductive textual analysis in Chapter 5, which analyzes the emergence of the transnational feminisms frame, my attention was drawn to how strongly disciplinary concerns and citational lines of inquiry shaped the literature. Such practices seemed to be overwriting transnational feminist activists' own thinking and working through of the challenges of forging transnational linkages that would not reproduce patterns of colonial domination. It was as if TF theory was developing with little sustained input from TF activists, and without much reference to their epistemologies, insights, and priorities, despite their occasional invocation.

This leads me to return, in Chapter 6, to examine transnational feminist texts that play a role in field-building. I also noticed that the practices of TF academic knowledge production function as field-building mechanisms, when claims of a new TFS sub-field were made or contested (see Nagar & Swarr, 2010; Tambe, 2011). I read key texts on TFA for how scholars related to — were oriented towards — transnational feminist activist *knowledges*. I had considered and consulted calls for papers (CFPs) and edited collections/anthologies of case studies, among the possible sources such as syllabi, journal articles, conference proceedings, and job postings with a focus on the place of TFA within the emergence of the frame of transnational feminisms, yet I chose to analyze, in chapter 6, texts from anthologies of TFA case studies published in 2010. I believe that their simultaneous publication marks a moment where TFA

achieves a less ambiguous presence within this literature. I conduct a textual analysis of aspects of these anthologies on TFA, as data, for what they reveal about contemporary scholarly orientations to TFA *knowledges*. G. Smith would likely respond that such theoretical texts often offer ideological, conceptual, or speculative understandings, the likes of which he suggests the researcher seeking to inform activism should bracket. I have endeavored to read the texts in the two ways he outlines above however, prioritized for my purposes: a) first, and primarily in my use, I do a textual analysis for how certain TFS texts contribute to the social and conceptual organization of TF/S, and b) only when necessary for my argument, secondarily, for their content/meaning. This is what differentiates the kind of textual analysis which I do, from more conventional analyses of texts. I invite the reader to keep this shift in orientations to texts and analyses in mind through the following chapters, as this different reading strategy is central to the data analysis, findings, and argumentation of this dissertation. Thirdly, following Campbell and Gregor, I read "to identify how the researcher–writer is located, the purposes for which a particular account is written and *what activities this particular account supports, or alternately, makes invisible* [italics added]" (2004, p. 53).

3. Conclusion

My methodology relies on an inductive approach to textual analysis that is informed primarily by institutional ethnography and political activist ethnography, yet, strictly speaking, is not either of those. In the following two analytical chapters, I demonstrate that transnational feminist academic theory and case studies can be read as data, and that they reveal scholars' orientations to, and assumptions about, what counts as TF knowledge. Furthermore, I identify particular "orientations" to transnational feminist activisms, their movement knowledges, and activist texts found in the literature. I also develop my explanation of my findings related to

citational theorizing and citational disciplining. Together, chapters 5 and 6 help to explain how TFA are invoked during the emergence of the transnational feminisms frame in North American academia, even as transnational feminist movement knowledges are often subjugated in this scholarship. I will return to the question of TFA informal learning and knowledge practices in chapter 7, when the interdisciplinary dialogue that I suggested in chapters 1, 2, and 3 is resumed. After defamiliarizing conventional academic knowledge practices and demonstrating how they socially and conceptually organize scholarly stances to TFA/K, the integration of SML approaches will become clear.

CHAPTER 5: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL AND CONCEPTUAL ORGANIZATION OF TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS

CHAPTER 5: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL AND CONCEPTUAL ORGANIZATION OF TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISMS

This is the first of two chapters presenting the textual analysis of transnational feminist scholarship (TFS). Chapter 5 looks at orientations towards transnational feminist *activisms* (TF*A*) in the literature (from about 2000-2010) when the definition of TF, including any distinctions from international feminisms (IF) and global feminisms (GF), was a main preoccupation for TF scholars. Chapter 6 looks at orientations towards transnational feminist activist *knowledges (and texts),* mostly in anthologies from 2010, a moment when the TFA begins to assume a little more prominence in TF/S. The importance of distinguishing scholarly attention to TFA and TFA*K* is one of the findings generated by the textual analysis method described in the previous chapter.

I acknowledge that insights from SML and my own experiential learning in TFA inevitably influence my readings of the TF scholarship: they orient me towards acknowledging TFA /K. I approached textual analysis from the well-reasoned assumption that transnational feminist activist milieus are valid autonomous sites of (often) harder-to-cite transnational feminist movement-based knowledges. I ask: how was the emergence of "transnational feminisms" in North American scholarship socially and conceptually organized? I want to discover how, actually, transnational feminist scholarship (TFS) emerged (with so little reference to TFA). North American WGS theory has drawn epistemologically and politically from North American feminist movements, and accountability to movements has mitigated against the more institutionalizing demands of academia. This symbiotic relationship has not been true of TFA and TFS as North American feminist scholarship transnationalizes. In my view, an unconscious nationalism (of knowledge production sites) seems to inform which activisms are chosen by feminist scholars for this important touchstone function. Below, I will argue that the eschewing

of TFA movement-engaged epistemological practices by WGS in favour of Anglophone academic feminist theory has contributed to the disconnect that I identify between TFA and TF/S. Accordingly, the unintended impacts of everyday academic knowledge practices are highlighted in my findings.

My textual analysis reveals that everyday academic knowledge practices, particularly citational and definitional practices, strongly shape orientations to TF, TFA, and TFAK within North American academic discourse. I believe there is an over-reliance upon developing transnational feminist academic theory citationally, that is, primarily through engagement with the texts of key North American-based scholars. This directs attention away from interlocution with transnational feminist activists and their knowledges and towards close reading of scholarship by critical, antiracist, and postcolonial feminist academics produced in English, and most often, published in peer-reviewed journals. I will argue below that citational practices have resulted in the recentering of Anglophone academic knowledges, North American university-based positionalities, and attendant visions of TF in the development of TFS. More movement-engaged routes to producing transnational feminist knowledges in dialogue with multilingual TFA/K are thereby eclipsed. Thus, I argue that citational practices also do another kind of work: they erase TFA intellectual work, in both senses – activist labor and knowledges – and by extension, activist agency as well.

By defamiliarizing seemingly unremarkable academic knowledge practices -- by questioning their obviousness -- I expose their surreptitious functioning as social and conceptual organizers that impact scholarly orientations to TF/A/K. Defamiliarization exposes their field-building functions, so field-building too is scrutinized. In the analysis below I will introduce some terms that I coined to articulate the findings from my textual analysis. I use the term

"citational theorizing" to refer to the practice of generating theory citationally, usually within the confines of particular disciplinary or interdisciplinary explorations.[56] The effect of citational theorizing – of diligently following foundational and paradigm-shifting texts via citational trails – is referred to as "citational disciplining." The term citational disciplining highlights: a) the over-determined framing of research and theory through allegiance to (inter)disciplinary priorities, and b) the ways in which certain TF agencies, knowledges, and texts are ruled in or ruled out through citational practices. Citational disciplining is a function, and an effect of, familiar academic knowledge practices such as referencing foundational, paradigm-shifting theoretical texts in order to frame or launch a/n inter/disciplinary contribution to North American transnational feminist thought.

The analysis I present below leads me to conclude that disciplinary lines of inquiry, theoretical allegiances, citational practices/praxis, and some other familiar academic knowledge practices have had a strong – too strong – influence on the development of the North American discourse of transnational feminisms. This contributes to the gap between TFA/K and TFS hidden under flexible uses of the term "transnational feminisms."

1. Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I offer both literature reviews and textual analyses. Sections 2 and 5 are literature reviews and sections 3 and 4 are textual analyses. I begin in section 2 by "siting" or situating TFA – the substantive and material cross-border forms of organizing and exchange to which women and feminists increasingly have turned over the last four decades – in their socio-historical and political-economic contexts. I start with TFA on purpose, and bracket a review of TF/S texts until section 5 of this chapter, so as to invert the conventional practice of beginning with foundational texts. In section 2, I explain the conditions of possibility for the emergence of

on-the-ground/on-the-web transnational feminist activist and advocacy networks. This "siting" of cross-border, multilingual movements anchors an understanding of "transnational feminisms" as transnational feminist *activisms.* As my research focus is on the disjuncture that was created between TFA and TFS as TF/S emerge *in the North American academy*, I give preference to academic feminist scholarship that takes seriously the on-the-ground practices of TFA groups, rather than the less movement-engaged streams of TFS or even activists' own narratives of this rise.[57]

In section 3, I present my first piece of textual analysis. I analyze the ways in which the term transnational feminisms is defined, debated, and understood in North American Anglophone scholarship. I examine the various meanings, emphases, and orientations (particularly towards TFA) of competing definitions. I find three main usages of TF in the literature. Transnational feminisms is most often defined as: a) a form of organizing, b) a (conceptual/theoretical) framework, and c) an emerging (sub)field. *My IE-inflected textual analysis shows how particular definitions imply specific scholarly stances towards TF as: a) an object of study, b) a theoretical lens through which to understand and analyze phenomena and texts, and c) a collective, institutionally-structured knowledge production project sited in North American universities.*

The textual analysis presented in sections 3 and 4 exposes two aspects of social and conceptual organization. I show, in section 3, how these different understandings of the term TF, in turn, socially and conceptually organize *scholarly orientations to TF/A*.

In section 4, I show how these different understandings of and orientations towards transnational feminisms are themselves socially and conceptually organized through conventional academic knowledge practices. I present a second piece of textual analysis that

looks more closely at academic knowledge practices in terms of their functions as social and conceptual organizers. I name and explain my findings on: a) citational theorizing, b) citational disciplining, c) frame replacement, particularly in terms of its field-building impact on TFS, d) the overwriting of activist knowledges through citational practices, and e) the field-building function of these academic knowledge practices as they are deployed in the development of North American academic TF discourse.

In section 4, in my discussion of frame replacement I delve into the definitional literature on IF, GF, and TF, to show how "transnational feminisms" has flourished in recent years in part because an argument is made that transnational feminisms is distinguishable from international feminisms (IF) and global feminisms (GF). While there is not necessarily broad agreement on this point, the recent ubiquity and dominance of the term TF within academia accomplishes a field-building function. (Interestingly, these three terms – IF, GF, and TF – also function within and without academia to identify modes of transnational feminist organizing.) I highlight some constellations found in the deployment of the terms IF, GF, and TF within the academic literature.

Would such a distinction hold if TF were understood as TFA? By examining the slippage between the academic discourse of "sisterhood is global" and more empirical uses of the term "global feminisms" to refer to activist practices, I show what is lost when *academic discourses* of TF, IF, and/or GF are conflated with *on-the-ground, activist, movement-based trans-border organizing* also referred to as IF/GF/TF. This example will illustrate my argument about how the conceptual and social organizing functions of conventional scholarly knowledge practices contribute to the "disconnect" between TFA and TF/S. The link between citational disciplining as an effect of citational practices, frame replacement, and field-building will be made clear.

In section 5, I return to a literature review, or a critical citational account, of foundational oft-cited postcolonial and antiracist texts of the 1980s and 1990s. These are "citings" which anchor: a) understandings of transnational feminisms a critical theoretical framework and b) the claims that TFS is an emerging (sub)field. (How these different emphases impact the stances that transnational feminist scholars take towards TFA *as sites of learning and knowledge production* will be addressed in chapter 6.) Section 6 of this chapter looks at the benefits of a more movement-centered understanding of TF for TFS.

2. Siting Transnational Feminisms: A Citational Account (Literature Review) of the Socio-historical Emergence of Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA)

The emergence of TFA on the world stage is recounted here, citationally, through a literature review of relevant feminist social science scholarship. In this literature, the terms transnational feminisms, global feminisms, and international feminisms refer to cross-border forms of women's and feminist organizing. For the sake of clarity, I consistently use the term transnational feminist activisms (TFA)[58] to highlight the usage of the term TF to refer to movements/ advocacy networks/activisms.

In the scholarship there are at least five historical developments that mark the emergence of contemporary women's and feminist cross-border organizing, or TFA. The first is the sharp rise in the number of transnational advocacy networks (TANs). The second is the ascent of neoliberal economic globalization as a form of global socio-economic governance that facilitates the move of capital, labor, people, business, and exploitation across borders in new, particularly nefarious ways. Globalization requires new modes of resistance, including feminist organizing across various borders. The third factor is the on-going development of information and communications technologies (ICTs) that facilitate transnational oppressions as well as

organized and spontaneous forms of resistance to them. The fourth is a series of World Conferences on Women and other relevant issues organized by the United Nations (UN) that provided, through satellite NGO Forums, a site for women to meet, think, and act in new transnational tensions and alliances. Fifth is the emergence of women from the Global South as leaders of TFA. These factors are elaborated upon below.

2.1 TFA is Part of an Increase in the Number of Transnational Advocacy Networks

Since Keck and Sikkink's (1998) ground breaking work on transnational advocacy networks (TANs), a number of studies have emerged that focus on transnational feminist networks. Women's networks are sometimes understood as a subset of TANs. TANs are defined by Keck and Sikkink as: "relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services" (p.2). A fuller definition of TANs unfolds in their study: TANs involve a group of principled actors organized in flat networks who promote a cause in domestic and international arenas by using information politics (particularly framing), symbolic politics, leverage politics, and/or accountability politics in order to change state and international organization (IO) behavior.

The recent sharp increase in the number of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) is part of the broader context within which TF women's movements have emerged over the last forty years. This has garnered the attention of feminist academics, somewhat belatedly. Speaking to the "disconnect" which this dissertation addresses, labor historian, Peter Waterman (2001) compares contemporary women's and labor internationalisms. He marvels both at the prevalence of women's internationalism and its relative under-theorizing by feminist scholars:

> Despite the energetic and innovatory activity of the women's movement and feminist academics, it was not possible up to the 1990s, to find one general theoretical book about women and international solidarity, or even one theoretically informed history of this….Despite the pending Beijing Conference, the situation had not been transformed by the mid-1990s. (p.155)

I share his dismay. However, as my analysis unfolds, I believe that some of the reasons for this gap will become clearer.[59] According to Keck and Sikkink (1998), the emergence of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) is best understood in terms of a constellation of facilitative developments. They emphasize the growth of international contact through easier, faster, cheaper transportation and communications technologies. Second, they assert that cultural changes in the post-60s era made the public more open to critiques of government behavior as human rights discourse and social movements became more popular. These changes combine to make international conferences more common. The decline of mass-based leftist political parties is said to have contributed to the emergence of NGOs as an alternative means of enacting change and challenging state hegemony. Finally the effectiveness of the transnational advocacy's "boomerang" pattern is noted as a likely driver of the marked increase in TANs: where the state has blocked protest, activists unite across borders and use the pressure of foreign states or international organizations (IOs) against their own state. While Keck and Sikkink emphasize important factors that contributed to the conditions of possibility for the (re-)emergence of strong cross-border linkages between women's groups, their analysis is liberal and statist, with a noticeable lack of discussion or analysis of neoliberal globalization as part of the broader context in which feminist and women's TANS emerged. They also do not engage a critique of NGOization.

2.2 TFA is a Response to Globalization

Many feminist activists and academics argue that it is precisely because oppression is organized across borders that resistance must also be. The spread of cross-border networking efforts often evolves along transnational lines as activists map the problems they tackle.[60] The links between the emergence of contemporary forms of cross border feminist organizing and globalization is emphasized both in historical and sociological analyses (Tohidi in Dubois, 2005; Moghadam, 2005; Mendoza, 2002).

Despite the well-documented negative impacts of globalization, Moghadam (2005) argues that global feminisms and transnational feminist networks (TFN) are a positive and necessary result of, and a critical response to, globalization. The positive benefits for Moghadam are the increase in the number of local women's movements and TFN as well as the recent adoption of international conventions through institutions of global governance made possible in part due to information communications technologies (ICTs). It is a dubious yet not uncommon claim that the existence of these networks is necessarily positive.[61]

2.3 TFA is a Result of Developments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have had an undeniably profound impact on TFA, enabling the flows of information, goods, capital, and people that mark globalization. The use of photocopiers, carbon paper, printing machines, and mimeographs that facilitated the newsletter exchanges by post between feminist groups in the 1980s and 1990s have largely been replaced by email, blogs, and websites. Although there is a hopeful sense among some writers who see in these technologies the promise of an increased interconnectivity, the access to these new ICTs is deeply asymmetrical. My experience of the early days of

integrating computers into transnational conference organizing and attendance revealed that a stark unevenness in access to technology is further exacerbated by the overwhelming use of English online and in TF organizing.[62] Nonetheless, activists and advocates do use whatever materials and technologies they have access to in order to exchange ideas, communicate, and strategize.

2.4 TFA Developed from United Nations-Centered NGO Advocacy

A major force behind the contemporary re-emergence of TF can be found in the opportunities taken by women by NGO participation in UN-centered advocacy, beginning in 1975 with the First World Conference on Women and satellite Women's Tribune (an NGO Forum). Throughout the UN Decade for Women (1975-85), a series of World Conferences on Women and satellite NGO Forums (1975, 1980, 1985) afforded women the opportunities to meet, clash, coalesce, and strategize around different understandings of women's oppression and its roots in hetero/patriarchal cultural norms, racism, developmentalism, and capitalism. A series of four related UN mega-conferences in the early 1990s followed: on the environment (1991), human rights (1993), population and development (1994), and women (1995).

The early, rare face-to-face encounters between women from around the world led to fiery conflict, and eventually to the development of transnational women's/feminist alliances. Such alliances consisted both of advocacy or lobbying efforts targeting the UN and member states, as well as more grassroots and revolutionary activist alliances that were born in the NGO Forums that typically precede the World Conferences. Participation in these opportunities helped women develop their skills, and led to increasing professionalization of movement activism, which not all advocates appreciated, particularly in hindsight (Conway 2010). Intense UN-

centered advocacy developed a cadre of femocrats who worked in state and IO positions, and many professionalized advocates and development workers in I/NGOs.

More recently, TF activists have turned their attention away from UN-centered advocacy towards movement building in sites such as the World Social Forum (Conway 2010, 2011), through large loosely connected catalyst networks (AWID, ISIS), through issue-focused women's NGOs and TANs, and in on-going informally linked grassroots exchanges. Yet the influence of these formative years of TFNs socialization into UN-centered NGO networking remains (Conway, 2010).

2.5 TFA is Characterized by The Growth of Southern Feminist Agency

Many discussions of globalization place an emphasis on *flows* of people, capital, ideas, jobs, and practices that cross or transcend national borders. Importantly, in TFA these flows are *multidirectional*. Emphasizing multidirectionality challenges core-periphery models; colonialist, developmentalist assumptions of transfers of expertise from the North to the South (Tambe, 2010); as well as the misguided belief that feminism "spread" from the West. An emphasis on the multidirectionality of flows in TFA foregrounds Southern feminist agency in the generation of important analyses and practices.

1985 is often seen as the historical moment when Southern feminists perspectives began to guide UN/NGO-centered transnational organizing. The formation of many Southern women's organizations helped to fuel this shift in the locus of mobilization efforts. South-South meetings that explicitly excluded Northern participants, who were known to dominate and offer inappropriate decontextualized strategies, became more common. Ferree and Tripp (2006b) argue that this flow outwards of feminist analyses from South to North has always been the case

to some degree or other. In recent years, Tripp argues that it is Southern feminists who are leading much of the transnational organizing efforts:

> Today, the shift in momentum from North to South is evident in three ways: in the types of issues being put on the table; in the kinds of organizations championing these agendas, including informal networks; and in the extent to which women's rights is perceived as a universal goal rather than a Western feminist project. (2006, p. 64)

Tripp credits this shift in momentum to the dynamic engagement of Southern women's and feminist groups in transnational networks, and their skillful use of international policy and documents. She also notes the importance of the higher educational levels of women, the increasing availability of ICTs, and the failure of Northern women's movements to seriously scrutinize their own countries' agendas and policies to the extent that Southern women have, due to the fact that Southern nations bear the brunt of many of the decisions made in the North (2006, p. 69-71). Tripp is convinced that the South is leading the global feminist movement and transnational activist organizing, yet the agency of Southern feminists should not be homogenized.

Which feminists from the Global South are leading TFA? English-speaking ability, class, and other factors impact whose voices are heard in international gatherings and who shapes the agenda of the better established feminist TANs. Southern feminist agency is alive, well, and leading the way for many, but to overemphasize that point is risky. The rise of a cosmopolitan cadre of feminist development experts, NGO staff, and scholars can also tilt representation of Southern feminist voices in particular institutional directions. The Northern, English-speaking, capitalist, neoliberal, and intra-national power differentials between women are all dominant forces shaping the contexts of these struggles.

To summarize, feminist scholarship has argued that TFA and related contemporary border-crossing practices grew in response to the factors listed above: neoliberal globalization, ICT developments, UN conferences, and other cultural, socio-historical and political-economic developments. Activists themselves might use the terms regional, global, international, and/or transnational to describe level or scale of this activism and advocacy. They also use identitarian terms such as feminist or women's for this work. In academic scholarship, TFA is often situated in such contextual analyses of conditions of possibility. What this means for how scholars engage the practices and ideas of TF social movements will be discussed below, keeping in mind that a SML perspective would remind us that these TFA on-the-ground/on-the-web locations and practices of TFA are not just objects of study by are also sites of epistemological activity generated in struggle.

3. First Textual Analysis: Definitions of Transnational Feminisms as a Form of Organizing, a Framework, or a Field and their Implied Orientations to TFA

In this section I shift from literature review to textual analysis. Recall that in IE, textual analysis considers implied orientations. In my study I look for orientations towards TFA as I examine: a) competing definitions of the term TF; b) slippages between the terms TF/A and TF/S; and c) the social and conceptual organizing functions evident in efforts to distinguish TF from competing terms, such as international feminisms (IF), global feminisms (GF) and global sisterhood. I deal with a) and b) here, and c) in section 4.

I use the term transnational feminist activisms, or the acronym TFA, consistently when I want to emphasize the activist meaning. Below, I examine the emphases in various definitions as well as the stances or orientations towards TFA that they imply or suggest. When I want to highlight slippage between the usage of the terms transnational feminisms and transnational

feminist activisms, I use TF/A. Similarly, when I want to highlight slippage between the understandings of TF as a general term/framework and transnational feminist studies as an emerging (sub-)field of study, I use TF/S.

The organization of this chapter does not reflect the iterative nature of my textual analysis and how my research questions were reshaped by the findings as they emerged. The first phase of my textual analysis of TFS was an inductive analysis of predominant preoccupations, lines of inquiry, and key concepts in early contemporary foundational TFS texts as well as a series of articles from the first decade of the 21st century that addressed TF/A. I then returned to begin a closer analysis of *one of the strongest lines of inquiry within the scholarship: efforts to define transnational feminisms*. The chapter begins with that definitional project and presents a more linear, though still somewhat reticulate line of argumentation.

The disjuncture between different understandings of TF manifests in two main definitional debates found within the academic TF literature. Both definitional struggles are part of disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary feminist conversations. The first of these debates is over the actual meaning of the term transnational feminisms. These definitions do not necessarily reference movements. The second, interwoven debate is over the similarities and differences between TF/A and similar terms: international feminism/s, feminist internationalism, international women's movement/s, global feminism/s, and global sisterhood. I, also, examine the implications of *how* the term transnational feminisms is deployed in this literature as: a) a form of organizing, b) a framework, and/or c) a field. As the textual analysis proceeded I began to identify how academic knowledge practices advance both TF/S definitional projects and field-building. My analysis centers the empirical, descriptive usage of the term TF to refer to women's

cross-border organizing, or TFA, however I do not mean to imply that the TF/S literature shares this emphasis.

The existing North American scholarship on TF indicates through its diversity of definitions, theories, and methodologies that there is a lack of consensus as to what exactly the term TF refers: cross border women's advocacy networks? a scale of feminist movement organizing?[63] theory? methodology? a discourse? a conceptual framework? a(n emerging) (sub)field of study? While tightly prescriptive definitions can inhibit certain lines of exploration, it is also true that over-extended, a concept comes to mean both everything and nothing. These are some of the implications of the definitional debates of early and recent transnational feminist scholarship.

The academic discourse of TF is influenced by, and responding to, some of the key socio-historical and political economic factors mentioned above, such as technological developments and neoliberal globalization. Theorists have scrambled to make sense of the bewildering changes wrought by neoliberal globalization, such as intensified transnationally-structured oppressions and displacements. They also study new, burgeoning, spontaneous forms of resistance. Accordingly, the frames of transnationalism, globalism, and internationalism are comparatively assessed across disciplines. For feminist scholars, too, this comparative process is important. (Below, in section 4, I will argue that TF's ascendancy, generally and over IF and GF, was accomplished through familiar academic knowledge practices undertaken at an institutionally felicitous moment for "the transnational." I refer to this process as frame replacement.)

I will also demonstrate how arguments for the inadequacies of these alternate labels – international and global feminisms – were advanced through everyday academic knowledge practices, many of them heavily reliant on citational practices. This comparative analysis and

differentiation, are, in most cases, accomplished following and critiquing certain academic literature, or what I call "citational theorizing." Some movement-engaged theorists, however, also brought insights from TFA into this discussion as well. Arguably, the term TF has emerged from this definitional debate as the leading contender for a framework up to the task of naming contemporary cross-border movements, in both sense of the word.

The lack of clarity of the term TF was most evident in the period from 2000-2010. Breny Mendoza a scholar of Latin American feminisms is troubled by the vagueness of the term TF. Part of her discomfort is due to the ubiquity of the term "transnational" in academic writing. Mendoza notes that TF can be used to mean anything from: a) UN conference-based advocacy; b) a "shared context of exploitation …across the North/South divide…"; c) potential solidarity in response to global capitalism (p. 296); d) "the multiplicity of the world's feminisms" (p.296); e) a "code word for western feminist dominance" (p.297); f) "even Third World feminisms" (p. 297); and/or g) "the increasing tendency of national feminisms to politicize women's issues beyond the borders of the nation state" (2002, p.296). However, while Mendoza demonstrates that the term TF is unclear, she acknowledges that it "contains a more literal meaning based on the concrete experiences of transnational organizing of women across the globe" (p.296). This is what I call TFA.

Within these many meanings, an emphasis on transnational feminist activisms, *per se*, is definitive of only *some* academic understandings of transnational feminisms. Yet, even referring to forms of women's cross border activism and networking as TF is not a straightforward task. As Marilyn Porter (2007) notes, scholars and leading activists of women's cross-border organizing use the terms 'international women's movement' and 'global and transnational feminisms' inconsistently and interchangeably, often defining the terms as they wish. (These

competing descriptive terms for feminist cross-border organizing will be discussed below in the section on frame replacement). It is not surprising, then, that as the term transnational feminisms gained greater currency in the early years of the 21st century, that this ascendancy was accomplished in part by a definitional project which sought to clarify meanings and usages of the term transnational feminisms in light of competing terms international feminisms (IF) and global feminisms (GF) and global sisterhood.

There is also a more implicit debate occurring in the background. I identified it through the reading strategy outlined in chapter 4, that is, by shifting my reading focus to *how* definitions function to conceptually and socially organize scholars' orientations to TF. My IE-inflected textual analysis reveals that the scholarly deployment of the term TF socially and conceptually organizes in three main ways: a) it marks TFA as an out-in-the-world phenomenon that functions as *an object of study* for some scholars; b) it refers to a theoretical or conceptual framework of a particular antiracist, postcolonial feminist citational lineage which scholars can use as *a lens* to analyze a wide range of topics, texts, issues, and events, called TF; c) it names and claims the development of a new (sub)field of WGS and TFS.

3.1 Transnational Feminisms Refers to Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA): Descriptor and Object of Analysis

I will begin by discussing TF understood as TFA. Transnational feminisms can refer to women's/feminist activisms in which groups separated by great distances work together against globalized and localized forms of oppression. I begin here not because this is the most prevalent usage of the term in TFS, but because I am advancing a textual analysis of the academic literature from the experientially-informed conclusion (assumption) that TFA are an important but overlooked autonomous site of TF knowledge production. This more empirical meaning of

TF refers to TFA and appears in the literature in two ways. First, the term TF defines a phenomenon conventionally: it is used as a descriptive term to refer to women's cross border organizing. Second, TFA refers to an object of TF scholarly analysis. This second understanding is more *directive* than definitive. It performs the function of conceptual and social organization in that it influences how scholars see, understand, and engage with TFA as *an object of analysis*. This is what I mean by an orientation towards TFA. This is quite different from engaging TFA as sites of alternative, autonomous TF knowledge-making. Both definitions are empirical and serve to name a phenomenon, but the second also socially and conceptually organizes scholarly stances to TF/A.

Manisha Desai (2005), a leading sociologist of TF, defines transnationalism as "both organizing across national borders as well as framing local, national, regional, and global activism in "transnational discourses." Her definition of TF is two-fold and centers a movement-informed understanding. For Desai, transnational feminisms:

> refers both to the practices of women's movements around the world and to a theoretical perspective in which women theorize and strategize for women's rights and gender justice across national boundaries, work in collaboration with women from other countries, and frame their activism in terms that are both local and global. Thus, transnational feminism refers to the flow of ideas, issues, strategies, organizations, and activists across national boundaries. (2007, para 1)

For Desai, advocacy, organizing, and activisms are central to TF. Social scientists and feminist historians are more likely to define TF as cross-border movements, networks, and activisms, that is, as empirical realities and practices. These scholars acknowledge the substantive and material

nature of TFA practices and discourses, yet they orient their scholarship *towards* TFA as *an object of analysis in their disciplines*. This will be explained in greater detail in chapter 6.

Self-identified transnational feminist Nayareh Tohidi, scholar of sociology and women's studies (Tohidi in Dubois et al, 2005), defines and situates transnational feminisms such that the object of study is TFA and the disciplinary origin of the academic discourse is postcolonial feminist studies. Transnational feminist networks are also referred to as forms of TF. She points to the knowledge-making capacity of both TFA and TFS when she says, "the academic and theoretical dimension of these [transnational feminist] networks is what we call transnational feminism and the debate around it has taken place especially within postcolonial feminist studies" (p.4). Tohidi acknowledges TF networks as epistemologically generative, but academic debates are still prioritized.

Tohidi's understanding of TF is informed by familiarity with inequities of power that occur in TFA and which concern postcolonial and transnational feminist scholars:

> The global, especially cyberspace and global media, become the privileged space to inflict political meanings and strategies. Locations and places almost evaporate as an essential context of political struggle and economic surplus production. The struggles and priorities of those women who do not have access to the Internet or transnational networks become neglected or get overshadowed by the mostly English-speaking, better educated and socio-economically more privileged women who can travel, who can go to these conferences, who have access to cyberspace, who can communicate with each other. (as cited in Dubois et al, 2005, para. 37)

Tohidi's emphases on these particular inequities, especially the language issue, resonate with my own first encounter with TFA. Such commentary on the everyday practices of TFA is noticeably

lacking in the work of many other TF scholars who explore transnational feminisms from a more theoretically informed framework-centered, movement dis-engaged perspective: an approach which I refer to as citational theorizing. In contrast, Tohidi offers a more empirically grounded definition and theorization of TF/A.

The usage of the term TF to refer to TFA accomplishes two things. First it names the on-the ground, on-the-web practices of cross-border women's and feminist organizing. Second, it subsumes this cross-border organizing to North American-based Anglophone scholarly study, as an object of inquiry, *even in movement-centered understandings of the term TF*. In this way we can see how particular definitions can imply certain scholarly stances or orientations towards TFA. Important for my purpose here, is to note that TFA is not understood primarily as autonomous sites of TF knowledge production that operates with movement-specific epistemologies.

3.2 Transnational Feminisms Refers to a Theoretical/Conceptual Framework: The Lense Function

The most common approach in North American academic TF discourse is to employ TF as a theoretical or conceptual framework.[64] In definitions of TF that refer to a framework for scholarship, TF's unique theoretical capacities are emphasized. These include: a) nuanced, comparative, relational, and intersectional analyses; b) questioning nation-states and nationalisms; and c) highlighting cross-border flows as part of over-arching systems of oppression and resistance. When TF is understood as a framework, we can see that it serves as a kind of theoretical lens which brings certain troubling power relations to the fore. When used as a lens, this framework can be applied across disciplines to a wide range of inquiry. I will now

consider both the lens function and the implications for limiting (or not) the potential objects of analysis, which the TF lens is used to scrutinize.

Some feminists who take up TF as a framework operate with the broadest sense of potential objects of analysis, as in much other feminist scholarship. Often disciplinary interests will exert a strong influence on the choice of objects of analysis and lines of inquiry. Disciplinary research questions are re-framed and newly addressed through this new TF lens. The TF framework can be used in virtually any social science or humanities discipline to analyze literary or visual texts, political events, epistemological and theoretical quandaries, and so on. While TF social movements and networks *can* be the objects of analysis, TFA are *not necessarily or definitively* either objects of analysis or relevant sites of knowledge when TF is used as a framework. TF social movements are not even considered in much of the broader TF literature. The breadth of this generous scope of inquiry means that TFA and their knowledges are less likely to be seen as important contributors to the TF framework developing in North American universities. Thus, this framework-centered understanding of TF invites a kind of overshadowing of alternate TF sites of knowledge-making and theory-building that are also transnational and feminist.

The theoretical lens function of the conceptual framework of TF can extend to limiting objects of analysis in some uptakes. In the influential work of foremost postcolonial feminist thinkers' Grewal and Kaplan (2000), TF functions as a theoretical lens, but *it also directs the critic's attention to certain practices that occur between differently situated women*. This kind of directive is a form of social and conceptual organization. Grewal and Kaplan assert that they prefer the term "transnational feminist *practices* [emphasis added]" to transnational feminisms, noting that "[t]ransnational is a term that signals attention to uneven and dissimilar circuits of

culture and capital" (2000, para. 3). They use the term transnational feminist practices to highlight "forms of alliance, subversion, and complicity within which asymmetries and inequalities can be critiqued" (2000, para.4). Grewal and Kaplan explain that their approach "refer[s] us to the interdisciplinary study of the relationships between women in diverse parts of the world," relationships which are "uneven, often unequal, and complex" (para. 9). This emphasis on 'practices' is open-ended, but the interest in unequal power relations between women in neocolonial and neo-imperial times effectively narrows the focus and differentiates a postcolonial, postmodern TF framework from more mainstream international/global feminist approaches which center their analyses on power differentials between men and women, and only more secondarily consider differences between women. Social and conceptual organization can be politically important to social justice research. Some scholars may be concerned with issues relevant to TFA, such as how feminisms, feminists, and/or women negotiate both ruling relations and relations of resistance, in the face of stark and seemingly insurmountable differences, including those between putative allies. Notably, these explorations of TF practices through a TF theoretical lens are not necessarily centered on TFA as an object of analysis. TF social movements may be inspirational fodder for the theorist, but they are not necessarily taken as important objects of analysis, sources of interlocution, or formidable sites of alternative TF knowledge-making. The term movements in such texts often refer to any cross-border flows: "The *study of* transnational movements in relation to histories of colonialisms and postcoloniality will produce new feminist theories" [emphasis added] (2000, para.10).

Richa Nagar and Amanda Swarr's (2010) interests also lie in advancing TF as a kind of *framework*:

> we propose that transnational feminisms are an *intersectional set of understandings, tools, and practices* that can: (a) attend to racialized, classed, masculinized, and heteronormative logics and practices of globalization and capitalist patriarchies, and the multiple ways in which they (re)structure colonial and neocolonial relations of domination and subordination; (b) grapple with the complex and contradictory ways in which these processes both inform and are shaped by a range of subjectivities and understandings of individual and collective agency; and (c) interweave critiques, actions, and self-reflexivity in order to resist a priori predictions of what might constitute feminist politics in a given place and time. [emphasis added] (p.5)

This interventionist conceptual toolbox approach is another manifestation of emphasizing the lens function of TF. Activisms *per se* are not part of the *definitional* terrain for Nagar and Swarr, and the object of study is in the broadest sense, power relations. They do, however, suggest "grounding feminisms in activist communities everywhere" (2010, p.5). This definition emerged out of their work on a volume on collaborative praxis that challenges binaries of theory/methodology, academia/activism, and individualism/collaboration, which will be explored in more depth in chapter 6. For the purpose of this analysis, Nagar and Swarr's definition of TF serves as an example of one which highlights the lens function of TF as a framework, but situates the definition of TF in a broader context which includes activisms as important sites and practices for feminist knowledge-making. In that sense, they do make an important overture to TFA as relevant to the development and refinement of the TF framework, different from Grewal and Kaplan's approach.

Janet Conway, whose work focuses on transnational feminist activisms at the World Social Forum, draws upon postcolonial feminist scholarly and TFA insights. She acknowledges a

wide range of uses of the term TF, including increasing reference to practices, activisms, and networks. She asserts, however, that among such uses,

> invoking of the transnational involve[s] recognizing (the possibility of) connection without erasing differences or ignoring inequalities, especially those rooted in histories of colonialism. In feminist usage, the term *transnational* often carries this ideological content and normative weight beyond its geographical or scalar connotations. [emphasis in the original] (2010, p. 152)

In the above definitions, transnational feminisms is taken up as a conceptual framework. The characteristic strengths of the TF framework include that it highlights flows of ideas, capital, people, resources, power, and resistance across national boundaries. It facilitates an interrogation of nations and nationalisms. The TF framework functions as a lens that orients scholars and students to pay attention to particular power dynamics as well as to particular theories. The "ideological and normative" dimensions highlighted above by Conway interpellate the critical scholar, inviting alignment with the broader political agendas of antiracist, anti-capitalist, postcolonial, transnational feminist thought. When the TF framework functions as a lens, it can socially and conceptually organize scholars' stances towards or away from a broad array of objects of analysis, only sometimes including TFA.

An analysis of power relations usually lies at the heart of TF inquiry. The choice of object of analysis can be, but is not necessarily, influenced by the emphases of the TF framework as just described, or by the disciplinary context itself. Despite Grewal and Kaplan's strong influence on the framework of TF, inequitable relations between women are not necessarily definitive of TF scholarship. Ideological and disciplinary leanings can also influence the selection of research focus. This intersectional, TF framework is one of the most promising

conceptual tools available to date for feminists who want to think critically, intersectionally, comparatively, and transnationally about power.

3.3 Transnational Feminisms is an Emerging Field of Studies (TFS): An Academic Knowledge Project

Given the variety of approaches to transnational feminisms within the North American academy, one could argue that this diverse set of approaches:

a) some emphasizing the study of feminist cross border organizing (TFA),

b) some emphasizing the development of feminist theoretical tools to understand transnationality and transnationalism in its various forms, and

c) some doing both, marks the emergence of a diverse field of transnational feminist studies within the North American academy. Where might TFA fit within such a field?

The confusion over the place of social movements as an object of study for TFS is notable in "Transnational Feminist Studies: A Brief Sketch" by postcolonial feminist historian Ashwini Tambe (2010). She asserts that "transnational feminism proposed new philosophical and methodological routes" seeking to break with international, global and comparative feminisms (2010, p. 1). (This effort to transcend the limitation of these competing frames will be discussed below). The version of TF that is proposed by Tambe is similar to that just outlined above, however she intends to sketch the outlines of an emerging field. She deploys TF as an academic framework, not a cross-border social movement, though she includes cross-border flows of ideas as a possible object of study in TFS. Tambe extends the scope of the TF framework to that of an emerging field without limiting its object of analysis.

For Tambe (2010) transnational feminist research is characterized by: a) a rejection of universalisms, including universalist understandings of gender, and also of "cultural

particularisms based upon nationalist mythologizing" (p.2); b) theorizing multidirectional flows between locales; and c) highlighting "[t]he mobility of people, goods and ideas" (p.3). She asserts that "the best examples combine all three" (p.3). Other characteristics include that public/private and imperial/domestic binaries are challenged. Tambe astutely highlights a definitive aspect of TFS when she asserts that exemplary work "detaches the study of gender from the arena of individual identity formation to examine it in the realm of supranational processes" (p.3). Finally, addressing embodiment within the colonial is a helpful addition to existing studies of imperialism in her view.

Tambe argues for TFS as a field of study centered around an understanding of TF as a critical postcolonial approach or perspective, without making movements – or anything else -- *definitive* objects of study to the field. Yet Tambe's own work looks at sub-national and transnational exchanges of ideas in a 1930s local language Marathi movement and travel writing which actually points to movements as sites of knowledge production. Her choice is perhaps due to the emphasis on the "feminism as a set of circulating ideas" in this branch of South Asian historiography (p.2). If so, her work is an interesting example of how disciplinary constraints simultaneously enable and confine an emphasis on movements as sites of knowledge production as TF scholarship advances.

While Tambe (2010) writes enthusiastically about Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS) as an emerging field, others are uncomfortable with such arguments (Mendoza, 2002; Nagar & Swarr, 2010). Nagar and Swarr (2010), trained in geography and women's studies respectively, are more ambivalent. First cautious, they state:

> [a]lthough such concepts as transnational feminist studies are sometimes invoked as if a subfield with shared meaning and assumptions exists, we suggest that … transnational

> feminisms [are] a diverse and diffuse field where hierarchies and practices pertaining to knowledge production have been unevenly treated in theoretical interventions. (2010, p. 2-3).

Yet, later, in the same essay, Nagar and Swarr are enthusiastic: referencing "a series of exciting academic interventions" from a postcolonial perspective, that "became topics of sustained debate and discussion *in a continuously emerging field of trans-border feminisms*" [emphasis added] (2010, p.5). Neither Tambe nor Nagar and Swarr are insistent that TF movements are necessarily an object of study, though Nagar and Swarr do gesture to the epistemological significance of activisms. Together these texts advance, incrementally and ambivalently, the case for understanding TF as something more than a framework, only sometimes related to TFA.

What differentiates deployments of TF as a framework and a field of study? As will be argued below, my analysis indicates that the net result of enough "series of exciting academic interventions" builds a (sub-)field. Tambe offers an astute analysis of how TFS in the discipline of history developed, but she does not actually offer an argument about why this scholarship should be considered as a *field*. She simply concludes her short sketch of TFS with a nod to empirical evidence of the prevalence of TF scholarship: "[i]t is a sign of the sedimentation of transnational perspectives in feminist circles that they permeate introductory textbooks to gender studies" (2010, p. 4). So doing, Tambe points us in the right direction. If an argument for considering TFS as a field is to be made, it should reference: a) common objects of analysis/preoccupations/questions for inquiry, b) political, ideological, and theoretical alignments and debates, and c) a notable, emerging volume of scholarship. The argument for TFS as a field must also offer more evidence of its institutional stature.

3.3.1 Grounds for naming transnational feminist studies (TFS) an emerging (sub)field. What are reasonable criteria for the claim that a new (sub-)field of TFS is emerging? In the first instance, to claim that a field is emerging would likely require the existence of scholarly work seeking an account of particular phenomena and addressing substantive theoretical, empirical, and methodological questions. "Shared meanings and assumptions" do develop as fields grow, but debate characterizes fields as much as consensus. There must be enough interest in a substantial number of questions and growing curiosity about how to best approach and understand certain phenomena. Just as TFA was facilitated by the socio-political factors listed at the outset of this chapter, such as developments in ICTs, resistance to globalized forms of oppression, and increased venues for exchange, TFS has also been an intellectual/theoretical response to these factors.

How is growing interest in TF measured? There is empirical, textual, and institutional evidence of field emergence. In the case of TF, over the last decade there have been a number of signs of steadily growing interest. There has been a notable increase in courses offered on TF. Canadian, American, and European academic conferences panels, conference themes, and entire conferences have been held on TF. Expertise in TF has appeared in many recent North America WGS academic job postings, both as an area of specialization and as a desired approach to other foci such as sexuality studies. Peer-reviewed journal articles on TF have mushroomed, and many new books and edited volumes have been published. A number of special journal issues on TF have appeared. Entire journals dedicated to aspects of TF have been launched. *Meridians: Feminism, race, transnationalism* published by Smith College, is described as "a feminist, interdisciplinary journal whose goal is to provide a forum for the finest scholarship and creative work by and about women of color in U.S. and international contexts"

(http://www.smith.edu/meridians). It has an advisory board of American-based feminist scholars and one South African-based scholar/activist. It was founded by a number of critical scholars of color and a few internationally known Southern thinkers. Since 2004 *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's and Gender Studies* has been published by SUNY Cortland with an editorial board of Western-based feminists. In addition to publications, an academic association or section of a larger association devoted to TF would also solidify the case for TFS as a sub-field. All of these developments indicate institutional and corporate support for the argument that the field of TFS is emerging. They also support my argument that academic knowledge practices have functioned in the case of TFS as field-building mechanisms due to the sharp rise in interest in TF in a short period of time, simultaneous to the North American university's efforts to internationalize/globalize.

If TFS is a field, how might this heterogeneous field be bounded? While porous boundaries are desirable, the "everything and nothing" problem of overextending the reach of TF remains. A field is generally expected to have shared objects and lines of inquiry with some degree of coherence, but not too much. When fields emerge from interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary dialogues, such as TFS, to bring coherence to the diversity of foci might employ the use of the vague conceptual language, such as "practices," to very broadly define the objects of analysis. Theoretical, methodological, ideological, and political allegiances and tensions can create conditions for debate and dialogue. Disciplinary constraints may produce new disciplinary insights, which may also circulate further through interdisciplinary conversations. As more texts are published, citations of previous works to frame new contributions increases and new citational trails are forged and can be followed. Interest in critiquing and advancing particular key concepts, frames, and frameworks can also help to bind,

and launch, a field. One expects to see rejection of older frameworks as inadequate, the development of and debate over new frameworks. This point will be returned to below, where I examine the social and conceptual organization accomplished through TF critiques of international and global feminisms.

In sum, then, above, we have seen that as TF has been defined differently, attendant scholarly orientations have been implied. TF is understood in the literature as: a) as form of organizing (scholars approach TFA as an object of analysis), b) a theoretical framework (scholars use TF as conceptual and methodological lens), and c) a field (scholars participate in establishing opportunities to create new knowledges). Transnational feminist scholarship is perhaps best understood widely: to include both a) and/or b) in c). However, my particular interest in is in the narrower sub-focus of applying a TF framework and a SML lense to TFA. In my opinion, dialogue between scholars who use IF/GF/TF frames, regardless of their object of study, and scholars who study on-the-ground practices of IF/GF/TF movements need to engage in more conversation to advance an ethic of movement-engagement within TFS, understood broadly.

We have also seen that a new framework or field can emerge when: a) there is a socio-historical or political-economic shift of great import; b) a paradigm shift occurs within a field due to exceptional and influential scholarship/theory; or c) a gap in a field is noticed. The North American discourse of transnational feminisms was a response to all of these factors.

In the next section, I will offer my analysis of how academic knowledge practices are involved in socially and conceptually organizing the development of North American academic approaches to TF and in determining the fate of TFA within this broader knowledge project.

4. Second Textual Analysis: How Academic Knowledge Practices (Citational Theorizing, Citational Disciplining, Citational Practices, Frame Replacement, and Field-Building) Socially and Conceptually Organize Orientations to Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA) within Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS)

What has been learnt so far through the textual analysis of the TF definitional project? Above I focused on the content, emphases, and implications of three main understandings of TF. I provided some preliminary insights into *how definitions socially and conceptually function to organize scholarly orientations towards TF/A.* In this section, through a second piece of textual analysis, I further identify academic knowledge practices that are used in generating TF definitional debates. I focus on the influence of citational practices and (inter)disciplinary commitments, which inform how definitions are advanced, assessed, interrogated, dismantled, replaced, and mobilized. I refer to this function of academic knowledge practices as "citational disciplining," and look at what is ruled in and ruled out by these practices. *The ways in which definitional practices/praxis function to direct scholarly approaches to TFA, specifically, is addressed.* Finally, I conclude this section with a consideration of how definitional debates, rather than simply definitions, are part of a process of frame replacement that fuels field-building. In the subsequent section, I will look at a concrete example of this with the competing frames of international and global feminisms.

Above we saw that three main definitions of TF are found in recent Anglo-American feminist scholarship. At first glance, this definitional project seems straightforward; it clarifies the meaning of the term "transnational feminisms." Identifying and defining key concepts are familiar enough knowledge practices as to barely warrant notice. Well-defined terms often

function as conceptual tools, until they don't, and then the process of critique, redefinition, or conceptual innovation begins anew. In defining terms, scholars typically compare, analyze, differentiate, identify, clarify, limit, name, label, and explain, splitting a few hairs along the way. Limiting the meaning of terms is a familiar Western epistemological practice, and one to which the English language seems felicitously suited. While scholars may quibble over the content, emphasis, import, or approach to crafting definitions, the importance of definitions is rarely questioned; definitions are tools upon which academics rely.

As I worked through the academic literature in an effort to understand how, *actually*, the disconnect between TFA and TF/S developed, I repeatedly asked myself "*how* did scholars miss what was happening in TFA circles?" Had I asked "why" at that point, I might have simply answered that they were not sufficiently engaging with TF social movements. In light of my commitment to asking *how, actually,* I rephrased my question to: "where did they get these ideas?" This question directed my attention to reference lists, bibliographies, and works cited. It was here that I found compelling textual evidence of where, *actually*, the writers in question got their ideas.

I then realized two things, both of which point to the importance of citational practices. First, most TF scholars, particularly those who were using TF as a framework, were not often citing movement or activist texts. I was alerted to the overwriting of TFA knowledges. Second, critical TF scholars rarely, if ever, cited the international or global feminisms scholarship. There are some ideological and political tensions between IF, GF, and TF frames, but despite some limitations, IF and GF literature does engage TFA and cross-border feminist movement/knowledge practices more directly than much postcolonial TF theory. Scholars who use TF as a critical framework are not usually referencing the work of scholars who write about

cross-border feminist organizing, especially work done under the frames of IF and/or GF. This raises some important questions: How to make sense of the politics of citational practices? Can we develop a more critical TF citational praxis?

In learning to read for the "how," I noticed that the questioning and defining of key terms was primarily accomplished by selecting certain academic feminist texts to cite, concur with, apply, or critique. This is the approach I refer to as "citational theorizing." A few scholars, such as Manisha Desai and Janet Conway who study TFA, however, do integrate more empirically accessed insights from activist sites into their definitions of TF.

I want to pause for a moment to consider another kind of work definitions do, to expose how they function as social and conceptual organizers, especially during the advent of TFS. I do so with an eye towards the fate of TFA in particular within this enterprise. I argue above that definitions imply stances or orientations. If TF is understood as TFA, then researchers generally orients to activisms as an *object of study*. If TF is understood as a theoretical framework, then one uses it as *a lens or conceptual tool to build knowledge*. As TFS develops into a field, a number of social and conceptual activities are undertaken: courses, minors, specializations, and majors are established; departments allocate hires for experts in TF; scholars form informal study groups; calls for papers (CFPs) are drafted, shaping the approach of submissions; conference panels, conference themes, and entire conferences are devoted to TF; articles, chapters, books, and funding applications are written. In these familiar, unremarkable ways, definitions imply orientations which imply particular actions to be taken. These functions are forms of social and conceptual organization. My attention was repeatedly drawn to the impact that these familiar academic knowledge practices have upon the treatment of TFA and their knowledges.

4.1 How do Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA) Fare in this Process?

Notably, none of these implied orientations is towards engaging activists as intellectual workers whose ideas can stand on their own and talk back to academic feminists. None of these orientations is towards movement knowledges as equally legitimate. For only a few scholars such as Manisha Desai, Brooke Ackerly, and Janet Conway, is there evidence of engagement with movement-based knowledge practices or activist texts. In this way we can see that definitions accomplish, or at least imply, a kind of organization of the stance towards TFA assumed by researchers and students.

I am troubled that these directives, which are embedded in various definitions of TF, impact the way in which many North American-based scholars and students encounter and understand TF/A. As my textual analysis progressed, and my SML lens was applied, I became more aware of how certain understandings push scholars and students into particular stances (or not) towards the out-in-the-world, on-the-ground, on-the-web, everyday practices of TFA and towards *their knowledges*. I cannot presume to know what any TF scholars were actually reading; however, I have ample evidence of whom they were citing and referencing. Activist texts are not predominant, even in scholarship on TFA, as we will see in more detail in the next chapter.

4.2 Citational Disciplining: The Politics of Citational Praxis

I have come to the conclusion that disciplinary lines of inquiry; theoretical, ideological, and political allegiances; and citational praxis have had a strong — too strong — influence on the development of the North American discourses of TF. I refer to this as citational disciplining. It is a shifty way in which familiar academic knowledge practices direct attention away from transnational feminist activists knowledges (TFAK) and back towards scholarship produced in

English, and most often, published in peer-reviewed journals or book format by academic presses. This troubles me even though much of this is excellent scholarship by critical, antiracist, and postcolonial feminists. However, reading and citing the latter – critical, antiracist and postcolonial scholars, many of whom are diasporic and based at North American universities – should not stand in for dialogue with TF activists. Citational preferences may be obscuring this gap between TFS and TFA as well as the analyses produced in movement sites. Herein lies an important tension: so much of the oft-cited scholarship is path-breaking and compelling. Yet, so were many of the activist conversations I witnessed in various TFA sites. How, then, do the former transpire as if unaware of the latter? The answer to this question is broached here through textual analysis that is attentive to citational and disciplinary signposts.

The surreptitious ways in which academic knowledge practices can overwrite compelling activist *knowledges* will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter. At this point, I simply want to assert that academic knowledge practices such as building theory by citing particular academic texts, or citational theorizing, can result in citational disciplining. In other words, these practices can restrict TF scholars to a narrower range of texts and interlocutors than makes sense if the common project is advancing transnational feminist knowledges. How this gap can be better attended to will be addressed in chapter 7, where I revisit the interdisciplinary possibilities of TFS and SML, discuss activist epistemological practices, and suggest conscious orientations to informal learning and knowledges in TFA sites. Before we arrive there, however, another dimension of the social and conceptual organizing power of definitions needs to be addressed.

4.3 Frame Replacement as a Field-Building Mechanism

Turning to consider the function of not just definitions, but definitional debates, I want to suggest that frame replacement functions as an important part of the process of advancing TF as

a new theoretical framework and field. When I shifted my focus to reading the literature for its social and conceptual organization, I was increasingly convinced not of the import, superiority, or purchase of any given definition of TF, but that the break with international and global feminisms has more to do with meeting disciplinary, interdisciplinary, institutional, publication, and field-building requirements, than a precise naming of critical differences between IF, GF, and TF. Especially if one centers an understanding of TF as TFA.

For TF to emerge as such a strong presence within WGS, similar terms such as international feminisms (IF) and global feminisms (GF) had to somehow be dislodged or overshadowed. The task of differentiating TF from IF and GF is more easily accomplished with non-movement based understandings of TF. The continuities between various forms and eras of women's cross-border IF, GF, and TF organizing can be as informative as their differences, as we will see below. In the case of TFS, I believe that these definitional debates function in a sense as field- (and career-) building mechanisms. At the very least they beget conference panels and themes, organize syllabi, and focus special journal issues and collected volumes. All of these individually or collaboratively undertaken, modular-seeming projects can coalesce into a field, even if scholars don't intend such an outcome.

Above, I have looked at how, actually, the gap between TFA and TF/S emerged on the North American academic side. Asked differently: Why was there a disconnect between TFA and TFS? One answer that emerges through textual analysis is that there seems to be a problem with scholarly reading and citational praxis and the sense of who the interlocutors in TF dialogues should be.

4.3.1 Differentiating frames: What is at stake when making the case that transnational feminisms is not international feminisms or global feminisms? There are two

comparable frames which scholars use to differentiate the term TF. These frames carry with them citational trails, emphases, and implications about who the researcher's interlocutors should be. The first term is actually a set of terms used interchangeably: international women's movement/feminist internationalism/international feminism (referred to hereafter as IF), which refer primarily to the models of cross-border organizing used in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century by women's groups. These terms however, have also been used in recent decades to refer to contemporary activisms. The second term from which TF is differentiated is global feminisms (GF). GF can refer to contemporary women's cross-border networking, particularly since the 1990s, or an academic discourse, from the mid 1980s. The comparative analysis of the terms IF, GF, and TF has been of greater interest to scholars than activists, whom, Porter (1997) reminds us, use these terms interchangeably. However, the relatively looser usage among activists should not be taken to imply that the question of terminology is benign.

Even if the differentiation of TF from IF and GF is explained with reference to historical factors such as the developments in ICTs, the resulting sense of frame clarity can be misleading. While there are new developments, in terms of degree of time-space compression, affordability, accessibility, and ubiquity, women communicating across borders for political ends using the communication technologies of the day, be they pen and paper or laptops and Skype, is not. To over-emphasize the newness of certain practices deprives us of a deeper understanding of some historical continuities. Some of those continuities have to do with the ways in which racism, classism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, and imperialism can permeate women's organizing. Some have to do with ongoing forms of oppression, others with strategies of resistance. (See Rupp, 1977; D'Itri, 1999 for more on this.)

Foremost TF scholars Grewal and Kaplan, in a sense, warned against frame replacement, asserting strongly that "[i]t would be impossible for us to advocate transnational feminism as an improved or better or cleaned up kind of international or global feminism…There is no such thing as a feminism free of asymmetrical power relations" (2000, para. 4). Yet, much of the literature does seek to differentiate IF, GF, and TF. For some scholars, the transnational frame may be better at bringing questions of inequities of power between women to the fore. Conway aptly notes that the term transnational when deployed by feminists is now taken to refer to approaches that seek connection between differently located women without succumbing to colonial amnesia (2010, p. 152). This is a troubling accomplishment from a perspective grounded in activist knowledges that would remember that these approaches were already employed on-the-ground in various cross-border feminist struggles, which were and are referred to alternately as IF and GF.

Another problem is the way in which frame replacement is intertwined with citational disciplining. As certain terms are ruled in or ruled out, certain bodies (interlocutors) and texts (activist and academic) are also passed over in favor of those indicated by the newer frame. This directive – or activating – aspect of familiar academic knowledge practices is an indication of the embedded workings of social and conceptual organization. That is why I argue that how we think about, and act in regards to, TFA are influenced by the definitions and frames that we use.

International feminisms. There is a tendency to differentiate TFA from older (19th and early 20th century) internationalist feminist /women's movements that were organized across national borders. Important precursors to transnational feminisms include the first wave of the international women's movement, which was primarily, but not exclusively, trans-Atlantic (Tohidi in Dubois et al, 2005; Rupp, 1997). Also notable were early feminist internationalists

who organized through socialist internationals around women's issues within a socialist framework (Tohidi in Dubois et al, 2005). Feminist scholars refer to the first wave of Western feminist/women's cross-border organizing as international feminism, feminist internationalism, or more commonly as the international women's movement (D'Itri, 1999; Rupp, 1997). Second wave Western feminism also had its internationalist moments, for better or worse (see Rich, 1984; Daly, 1978, respectively). In the 1970s and 1980s transnationally organized activists used the terms international women's movements and international feminism. Some used a clear emphasis on "women" *or* "feminist" to characterize the ideological alignment of this organizing. Others used the terms interchangeably.

In "Beyond Internationalism: Women, Feminism, and Global Solidarity," Peter Waterman (2001) defines and discusses internationalism as follows:

> Internationalism...is not simply a matter of activity within an international instance, nor is it limited to the international level, nor does it require a global reach. Etymologically…it is a relation between nations/nationals/nationalisms. Historically it has been demonstrated between two specific countries/regions, or within a particular region. Indeed, it is at the regional, rather than the global, level that internationalism is likely to be practiced most intensively. (p.162)

In its strictest political sense internationalism refers to a principle that promotes economic, political, and other forms of collaboration and cooperation between nations. Popularly, it is often understood as a sensibility or spirit of a unifying set of values which *transcends* national interests.

These two modes, "the internationalism of nations and the internationalism of transcendent values" (Malkki, 1994, p. 56) are not without their tensions. The between-nations

aspect is salient and definitive of internationalism for many scholars. Ferree and Tripp (2006) explain their motivation for hyphenating the term as follows: "A typical organization of a hundred years ago was '*inter-national'* in the sense of multiple national organizations belonging to a coordinating umbrella organization to which each national member group sent representatives" (p. 12). That early feminist internationalists sought at some level to *transcend* the national, does not negate the fact that internationalism, by definition, relies on the national, either to organize or transcend. From a transnational feminist perspective, this nation-centered approach disappears the differences between women in particular nations. The nation-state is taken as the representational, organizing unit, and this can invite a homogenizing of identities within borders. Nationalisms are also troubling.

Despite this problem and the rejection of the term international by many postcolonial feminists, the socialist roots of internationalism still exert their pull on some contemporary critical theorists. Recently, a few feminist scholars have returned to feminist internationalism out of an attachment to the vision of socialist internationalism. Chandra Mohanty (2003) says in the first footnote of her collected essays, *Feminism without Borders*:

> I find the vision embodied in the old left notion of internationalism inspiring, and although I critique the use of the category 'international' in social science discourse, preferring to use the term 'transnational,' I very much aspire to an internationalist vision of feminist commitments and struggle. (p.253)

Socialist usages resonate to a certain degree with early women's internationalism in that agency was with the people (women/workers) and not limited to states and state actors. There was/is an urgency among feminist internationalists to transcending the limits of the patriarchal, capitalist nation-state.

Miranda Joseph, Priti Ramamurthy, and Alys Eve Weinbaum (2005) in their essay "Toward a New Feminist Internationalism" take the term feminist internationalism away from modes of mobilization and instead argue for the term's significant *methodological* implications. They use feminist internationalism to maintain an emphasis on the continued relevance of the nation-state in terms of structuring oppressions and:

> to signal a shared reliance on, and sense of the continued relevance of, the analytics of Marxism in rethinking women's studies and feminist knowledge production, and to invoke (so that we might draw upon) the historical relationship between women's movements and Marxist conceptualizations of politics…underscore[ing] the significance of global capitalism. (p. 207-8)

The frame of internationalism, then, informs early international women's/feminist organizing, its historiography, and some contemporary Marxist-inflected transnational feminist scholarship which argues for increased emphasis on political economy and anti-capitalist perspectives. There is some continuity between the practices and challenges of women's cross-border organizing across the decades.

Global feminism/s. Leila Rupp, historian of 19th and early 20th century women's organizations, champions the term global feminisms. In a 1998 article entitled "Feminisms and Internationalism: A View from the Centre" Leila J Rupp argues:

> I would argue optimistically for the promise of global feminisms. If nationalism and internationalism do not have to act as polar opposites; if we can conceptualize feminisms broadly enough to encompass a vast array of local variations displaying multiple identities; if we work to dismantle the barriers to participation in national and international women's movements; if we build on the basic common denominators of

women's relationship to production and reproduction, however multifaceted in practice;

then we can envisage truly global feminisms that can, in truth, change the world. (p.538)

The seamless way that Rupp segues from an optimistic discussion of internationalism to global feminism is telling, as is the centrist claim in the title of her article. Internationalism, as a spirit, sensibility, set of practices, and politics does often inform what has come to be called global feminism and less often, global feminism*s*. Yet, the term "global feminism" connotes more than feminist internationalism or international feminism.

At a descriptive level, the term "global" emphasizes the scale, arena, breadth, exponential growth, integration, and successes of women's advocacy and feminist activisms in recent years. Ideologically, its use tends to be aligned with liberal, rights-based approaches to social change. However, the term is also sometimes used interchangeably with IF and TF and is also used by more left-leaning groups on-the-ground as well. The slippage between the terms TF and GF on the one hand, and between different meanings of global feminism on the other, further muddies murky waters.

Confusingly, global feminism/s is a term used to refer to:

a) cross-border women's networks and feminist advocacy, which developed in dialogue with and alongside UN conferences from 1975 onwards, and especially around women's human rights from the 1990s onwards;

b) the White American Anglophone academic discourse of "global sisterhood" that began in the 1980s with Robin Morgan's edited anthology *Sisterhood is Global* (1984), which compiled reports from nationally framed feminist groups, but subsumes their analyses under Morgan's over-arching gender-prioritizing narrative of women's common oppression under patriarchy;

c) the related discursive formation of "global feminisms" which is critiqued by postcolonial and transnational feminist scholars for its liberal, reformist, universalist, and neocolonial/neoimperial tendencies; thereby conflating the heterogeneous and often anticolonial, antiracist, anticapitalist on-the-ground practices and analyses of the groups referred to in (a) above with the colonialist, racist, and universalizing failings of (b) above.

In the many postcolonial critiques of global feminism/s, problematic texts by White American feminists Robin Morgan and Charlotte Bunch are often cited as evidence of the hegemonizing intent of global feminisms (see Grewal 1998, 1999 as examples). There is a troubling slippage in some of these critiques. *These critiques operate as if the discourses that these white Western feminists promote are somehow transparently descriptive of the heterogeneous on-the-ground practices* of transnationally organized activists. The academic usage of the term "global feminism" is narrowed by a citational trail to a particular problematic lineage more accurately referred to, in my opinion as the North American "discourse of global sisterhood." It is exemplified by Robin Morgan.

The citational nature of frame critique in academic feminist texts situates Robin Morgan's anthology *Sisterhood is Global* (1984) as the paradigmatic *faux pas* of Western feminism's second wave approach to conceiving of international solidarity between women. The anthology itself was important and valued by activists. For one of the first times it made the ideas of a wide range of women from around the globe accessible in English, which for better or worse, is a common language of exchange. It was Morgan's introduction, framing the very diverse reports from various nationally-framed women's movements which follow that was more troubling. The "sisterhood is global" discourse which Morgan advances therein has been subjected to scathing antiracist and postcolonial critique.

If titles speak volumes, then *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology* leaves little doubt about its assumptions and aspirations. Despite the title and the listing of contributions by country name, Morgan was seeking to *transcend* a representative internationalist framing through a liberal feminist move. She explains, "[o]ur emphasis is on *the individual voice of a woman not as an official representative of her country but rather as a truth teller*" (p. xiv) [italics in original]. She emphasizes …"shared attitudes among women which seem basic to a common world view. Nor is there anything mystical or biologically deterministic about this commonality. It is the result of a common condition which, despite variations in degree, is experienced by all human beings who are born female." (p. 4)

This desire for a shared critique of universal patriarchy comes from an American and Western feminist agenda of establishing that universal patriarchy is the main problem faced by women worldwide. This perfunctory acknowledgement and quick downplaying of differences, was indeed a hallmark of much Western feminism before intersectional critiques radically and effectively challenged gender-centric analyses. This glib glossing over of difference emerges elsewhere in Morgan's intro: "Perhaps it is that women are more interested in the potential bonds between people than in the differences (real, exaggerated, or imposed)" (1984, p. 25). Towards the end of her essay, Morgan asks: "Are we then really so very different?" (p. 36). The overemphasis on the common bond of gender and the lack of any integrated intersectional analysis leads Morgan to make astounding claims such as: "Women *are* the world's proletariat…" (p. 14). It is not that Morgan is unaware of race and class differences, it is that she understands them as nothing more than patriarchal impositions on women: "To fight back in real solidarity, however, as a real political force, requires that women transcend the patriarchal barriers of class and race…" (p. 20). The cumulative impact of Morgan's blind spots, cavalier

assumptions, and romanticism was to evoke both the admiration of white middle class feminists and the ire of many women of color, and of postcolonial and third world perspectives, though she certainly has her allies among activists around the world.[65]

If scholars of transnational feminisms seem eager to break with global feminism, it is the universalist, imperialist, gender-prioritizing, difference-subsuming aspects of the sisterhood is global discourse that most offend. The critique is an important one, but to tar *global feminist activisms* with the same brush is too hasty a move. Due to citational rather than empirical tendencies in TF theorizing, the sisterhood is global *discourse* stands in for global feminisms(used to refer to both activisms and a theoretical discourse), and is often then conflated with certain forms of on-the-ground, cross-border feminist organizing. This GF on-the-ground organizing is referred to by many activists as global feminist advocacy (see Grewal 1998 for a clear example of this wherein her critique of WHR discourse is advanced without citing relevant activist texts). This slippage between meanings of GF --the North American 1970s-80s academic discourse of global sisterhood and the 1990s WHR-centered activism -- informs some critiques. Moreover, Morgan and Bunch are not alone to blame, for even critics through their citational practices allow White American universalist feminists, such as Morgan and Bunch to speak for literally hundreds of thousands of women around the world, many of whom were engaged in challenging the power dynamics of the world economic and political systems, of women's participation in NGO forums, and in their own national environments along the lines of race, language, class, caste, religion, sexual orientation, disability, political ideology, etc. If subaltern activists cannot be heard, it isn't because they cannot speak. Their academic allies are shouting over them.

The role of citational theorizing also warrants concern. This kind of critique of GF is not the result of careful empirical work on the actual practices, discourses, and counter-discourses used among activists at the time. When the term "global feminism" is used for *both* the academic/activist neocolonial discourse of global sisterhood and on-the-ground global feminist activisms, which often involved women with anti-colonial analyses, the problematic tendencies of North American academic "global sisterhood" discourse are written onto the phenomenon of global feminist activism, ultimately subsuming and erasing many oppositional activist practices and discourses which actually challenge the hegemonizing tone of sisterhood is global discourse, under whichever guise it may be operating. Thus, citational practices, which critique discourses, can also do another kind of citational disciplining: they erase activist agency. I have called this practice of following citational trails to explore the substantive concerns of particular disciplinary and interdisciplinary concerns "citational disciplining." The erasure of activist agency is an example of the overwriting of activist knowledges that citational disciplining accomplishes.

It is crucial to understand that the break with global feminism, if there was one, by transnational feminist scholars, does not align with a similarly named shift in activist practices from naïve, colonialist, universalist Western dominated models to more equitable, multivocal models. Many activists, North and South, were well on their way to being co-opted by reform, liberal, and neoliberal strategies as they began to work in closer contact with the UN machineries. Others spotted the danger, withdrew, and challenged the professionalization of activism and the NGOization of their movements. But, this does not mean that activists in the Global South were *en masse* cajoled into complicity with universalist global feminist discourse or that they learned from academic postcolonial feminist theorists based in the West how to think

about their experiences of oppression, how to analyze their situations, or how to resist. Those practices have much longer local, national, and transnational histories than western scholarship would indicate. Something much more nuanced and constructive was happening among many "global feminist" activists at the time. Janet Conway's (2011) alternative genealogy of feminist knowledges at the World Social Forum and Vera Mackie's (2001) otherwise astute analysis of Japanese feminist organizing, however, both indicate that antiracist and anti-colonial tensions within feminist organizing might be drowned out as activists move into transnational sites.

Frame replacement: What is at stake? I want to consider the implications of frame replacement from a movement-centered perspective. One risk of overemphasizing the differences between IF, GF, and TF/A, is that we can lose sight of some very important similarities. All of these terms refer to women communicating across borders for political and social justice ends, using the available communication technologies of the day. Two histories of early women's organizations by Rupp (1997) and D'Itri (1999) indicate that over one hundred years later, feminists still organize transnationally around issues such as violence, trafficking, and other civil, political, social, and economic rights. We can see striking similarities between the past and present at the strategic level as well.[66] Then, as now, cross-border organizing was hampered by an inability to navigate or even recognize serious differences, such as class, nationality, culture, political ideology, theoretical, and strategic preferences. Western women who travelled were sometimes surprised to discover that women in countries of the "East" exercised more control over their lives than they had assumed. The racism, classism, imperialism, and Christian missionary impulses of Western women leading movements alienated women in non-Western countries. None of these IF problems remained firmly in the past, they are ongoing concerns in contemporary TFA.

To over-emphasize the newness of certain practices is ahistorical, and subsumes important lessons to be learned from the striking continuities of cross-border feminist struggles across many decades. Empirical, comparative, cross-historical analyses need to be conducted, while bracketing some of the ideological overwriting that accompanies terms such as international and transnational, so that activists and scholars can learn to see both the similarities and differences of cross-border activism that may go by these different names.

Significant differences between IF, GF, and TF, in terms of socio-historical context, sensibilities, priorities, values, strategies, and ideological commitments can be delineated between activists of these different eras as well as in the scholarship about them. However, the picture which emerges is also one of continuums – historical, geographical, and ideological – rather than a set of discrete categories. Something important is lost when heterogeneous activisms are too tidily contained in frames which in practice they regularly transgress. The messiness and uncontainability of women's and feminist cross-border organizing makes itself felt in the slippage between these frames that one still encounters in the academic literature, despite efforts to differentiate them.

Clearly there are important social, historical, technological, economic, and political changes that shape significant differences between historical and contemporary forms of women's cross-border organizing, between early IF and contemporary TF. That analysis is important, as is a careful exploration of the similarities and differences between meanings, implications, and deployments of the terms international and transnational. My goal here is not to wade into this debate, but rather to note that the distance accomplished from IF and GF through frame replacement, helps to build a new field of TFS. It is hard to imagine all that goes by the

name transnational feminisms being so eagerly embraced in the contemporary academic climate, if addressed under the older term international feminisms.

There is an aspect of frame replacement that stymies the development a more heterogeneous dialogue, even between scholars interested in cross-border manifestations of feminisms. We can see the effects of citational disciplining when reading through the reference lists of texts that use only one of these IF/GF/TF frames. When eras of IF and GF activisms and bodies of IF/GF scholarship are marked as dated and tainted, they are removed from the vista of TF explorations. Scholars reading practices are disciplined by the interplay of definitional debates, citational disciplining, frame replacement, and field-building. Some potential interlocutors and alternative epistemologies are lost in such a move. Postcolonial scholars are less often cited in IF/GF literature, and vice versa.

TF/S has emerged as the strongest contender, for the time being. If TFS is to develop into a more varied conversation between scholars aligned with different methodological and theoretical approaches, attention to the development of a more thought out reading and citational praxis are needed. One way to offset the narrowing that accompanies frame dominance is to ensure that the compelling academic TF scholarship engages in ongoing dialogue with empirical studies of TFA that use the global feminisms frame, as well as with movement knowledges, as the field of TFS progresses.[67] Below, I review the foundational postcolonial scholarship upon which much but not all TFS is based.

5. Citing Transnational Feminisms: A Citational Account of the Emergence of Transnational Feminisms/t Scholarship (TF/S)

This chapter began with a literature review of arguments about the conditions of possibilities that lead to exponential growth in TFA and the socio-historical context of the

emergence of TFA. That trajectory is important to TFS in at least two ways. It situates or sites of TFA in its out-in-the-world context, as it names TFA as a social phenomenon and an object of analysis. It also maps one citational route towards TF in the broader academic literature. I turn away from textual analysis now, and back to a literature review of the more conventional epistemological and citational roots/routes of the North American academic discourse of TF. This section offers a citational account of the early emergence of TF as a postcolonial, anti-racist, (and sometimes postmodern) conceptual framework that challenged the racism and colonialism of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS).

As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation and as we will see in the final section of this chapter, this early seminal literature acknowledged the epistemological potential and political import of TFA, but did not often study movements specifically. The socio-historical influences discussed above: neoliberal globalization, ICTs, and UN World Conferences on Women also partly explain not only the emergence of TFA but also contribute to the emergence of TF discourse within the North American academy. The first two factors are co-implicated in a global geo-political shift that sparked, within North American universities, multi-disciplinary interest in the "transnational." Feminist academics struggled collaboratively with contemporaries in other disciplines to make sense of the bewildering changes wrought by neoliberal globalization. They did so often in a series of interrogations that conceptually relied upon and scrutinized the "transnational," "global," and/or "international." Such terms name the scale and track the processes through which new developments in ICTs, business, banking, and labor practices enabled unprecedented "flows" of capital, people, objects, and ideas across borders, challenging the power of nation-states.

Contemporary academic feminist explorations of the transnational might have emerged in dialogue with other disciplinary critiques of neoliberalism and globalization, but they were unique in their simultaneous emphases on overarching and intersecting capitalist, hetero-patriarchal, racist, homophobic, imperialist, colonialist, and ableist systems of oppressions. The breadth and nuance of intersectional TF theorizing is due in no small part to North American TF intellectual genealogy being strongly rooted in postcolonial, antiracist, collaborative feminist academic scholarship. The term "transnational feminisms" in English emerged out of postcolonialist feminist studies and was initially marked by a literary and cultural studies slant that has been increasingly challenged and supplemented by political economy and Marxist analyses (see Dubois et al, 2005; Joseph et al, 2005).

As we saw above, a very common usage of the term TF within the North American academy is in reference to a conceptual/theoretical framework emerging from antiracist and postcolonial feminist studies. The scholars discussed below do not necessarily use the term "TF" in these earlier works. However, *the kinds of questions they ask* about colonialist implications of academic (feminist) knowledge production and power relations between women, including feminists, certainly are hallmarks of how the term TF has come to be employed. This way of thinking challenged North American feminists to move beyond a singular focus on gender, and sought to unsettle unconsciously colonialist and North American-centric understandings of feminism and of women of the Global South. Together with overtly antiracist scholarship, the success of such postcolonial critique helped impel WGS to add that pesky but efficient "s" to feminism. Accordingly, today when transnational feminism*s* is understood primarily as a theoretical framework or an emerging field of studies it is most often encountered and explained citationally, with reference to these subversive, yet, for TFS, canonical postcolonial feminist

texts. I have bracketed this more familiar Anglophone, academic, citational route towards an understanding of TF until the activist roots/routes of TF were explained above.

While I am at times critical of the ways in which North American-based transnational feminist scholarship recenters North American positionalities and academic knowledges, this does not mean that I am unconvinced by postcolonial and antiracist critiques of the neocolonial workings of the sisterhood is global discourse; the imperialist elements of the discursive formation of global feminisms; or the hegemonizing ways in which Western feminists, Western feminist thought, and cosmopolitan Southern elites function in transnational feminist spaces. I am convinced. I understand that academic and NGOized discourses circulate and have conceptual and material effects that can impact and eclipse practices on-the-ground. The neoimperialism of Western feminisms is not simply tucked away in ivory tower texts. I have seen first-hand that Western (and Japanese) colonialist thought is a troubling presence in face-to-face and virtual TFA gatherings. The incisive critiques advanced by postcolonial, antiracist, anti-capitalist, and transnational feminist scholars are essential in exposing and challenging these power dynamics. But, and this but is pivotal to my argument: *so is much critical, anti-colonial, movement-based transnational feminist thought.* I invite the reader to consider that the kinds of arguments advanced especially over the last 10-20 years in North American transnational feminist scholarship may be echoing – but not citing – similar activist insights. I am not claiming that academics plagiarize movement knowledges, but that they are often unaware of the depth and breadth of activist thought that may well have circuitously shaped their thinking in difficult to cite ways.[68] It is this critical activist-generated knowledge that I seek to keep in sight as I analyze the development of North American academic understandings of transnational feminisms.

In this section I review foundational texts from the 1980s and 1990s that provide the citational grounding for contemporary academic scholarship on TF (2000-present) with a close eye to the place of TFA therein. Contemporary academic discourses of TF have their beginning in the paradigm-shifting interventions by a few key diasporic antiracist and postcolonial feminist scholars located in North American universities. In this section I will discuss works by Chandra Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak, Anne Russo, Lourdes Torres, Jacqui Alexander, Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal. Most of these scholars still work in the field. These individuals often develop their ideas in collaborative writing partnerships and projects. The simple fact that such interventions were led by diasporic women scholars whose own learning and experiences necessarily referenced not only a wider frame than that of the US or Canadian contexts, but also were grounded in anti-colonial contexts of struggle alludes to the epistemologically generative power of transnational subjectivities and knowledge production.[69]

One of the earliest collective interventions into the unconscious colonialism and nationalism of Western academic feminist thought was the 1983 conference "Common Differences: Third World Women and Feminist Perspectives." Organized by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and a "multiracial, international group of women consisting primarily of graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Illinois," the conference brought together over 150 women speakers to an audience of 2000 (Mohanty et al, 1991, p. ix). Antiracist feminist critiques were well under way at this point, but this initiative began the work of de-homogenizing "women of color" and making space for the specific insights and analyses of immigrant women's anti-colonial thought. Importantly, this conference included international women's movements as one of three key themes. Its two other themes were "Colonization and Resistance" and "Images and Realities" (Mohanty et al, 1991, ix). This was a critical and

visionary intervention into academic Western feminist thought at the time. For TFA the 1980 UN women's conference and NGO forum in Copenhagen was marked by fierce debates across North-South lines, and by the end of the UN women's decade conference in 1985 at Nairobi, a more cooperative tone was noted, as Northern feminists had begun to grapple more effectively with the limitation of their understanding of Southern women's situations and Southern women were emerging as leaders of TANs (Ferree & Tripp, 2006).

5.1 Chandra Talpade Mohanty: "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses"

Foundational TF texts have questioned the unconscious colonialism of western (feminist) knowledge production on Third World Women that effectively suppressed these women's voices. The first was Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (1984) "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." This text also names white feminist methodological universalism, and the feminist-by-osmosis theory implicit in the global sisterhood discourse. As we will see below, Mohanty produces scholarship that meaningfully informs a feminist politics of decolonization, antiracism, anti-imperialism, and anti-capitalism. More than any other prominent postcolonial thinker Mohanty's work reads as a serious intellectual and political engagement with activist thought. In this insightful, seminal critique Mohanty argues that White western feminist scholarship represented Third World Women monolithically as victims of their culture. She takes issue with the analytic categories and methodologies used in feminist scholarship on Southern women, which she calls "methodological universalism." She deftly shows how this academically produced discursive (mis)representation is then mistaken by Western feminists for a material reality. The results are the erasure of Third World Women's agency and resistance.

Mohanty traces this misrepresentation and use of inappropriate analytical categories to an ideological goal of western feminism: to prove universal gender oppression. The conceptual and material effects of this move include the implicit comparative production of a) western feminists as already free and liberated, and b) Western nations being advanced along an assumed historical process of linear progression. Ashwini Tambe, following Anne McClintock, refers to this as "[t]emporal hierarchies…[being] read onto geographies" (2010, p. 2). The flow of liberatory ideas, practices, and funding was and still is seen by some Western feminists as unidirectional: from West to East or North to South.[70] This tendency towards ethnocentric universalizing is said to have led to the alienation of many Third World Women from feminism, which was seen as Western and imperialist. It is worth noting however, that while this is still true for some, many contemporary TFA networks in the South embrace an avowedly feminist perspective as a counter-measure to the kinds of co-optation that women's participation in UN-centered efforts lead to (Conway, 2010).

Mohanty's analysis of the colonialist misperception of Third World Women's realities echoes tensions in TF activist exchanges as well. Certainly Southern women activists attending NGO Forums in Mexico City (1975), Copenhagen (1980), and Nairobi (1985) encountered – and countered – gross misperceptions of their realities on the part of their Western feminist interlocutors. These heated debates were happening for almost a decade in TF activist contexts prior to the publication of Mohanty's groundbreaking essay.

To correct these colonialist epistemological and methodological biases, Mohanty advocates a decolonizing agenda: an empirically generated analysis of material reality, agency, and resistance. This involves recognizing agency and resistance, even where they have been written out of history or take forms unfamiliar to western analysts. I would add that part of this

project involves learning to recognize not just agency and resistance in unfamiliar forms, but also theory. One of the implications that I am in pursuit of here is that scholars located in the North, who have no contact with activists in the South need to be very careful of the pull of disciplinary and citational practices that shape our learning about peoples and places very far removed from our own experiences. This pull is, I believe, precisely towards the problem Mohanty (1984) so cogently outlines: allowing representations to be reified and stand in for actual people and practices.[71] Furthermore, I would argue that scholars – diasporic, immigrant, and of colour – have stood in for Southern activist interlocutors. If I am correct, this explains, at least partially, how TFS developed without dialogue with TF activists as a vital epistemological strategy. Scholars were primarily reading, or at least citing, theory by diasporic theorists working in the North American academy, some of whom were following movements to differing degrees.

Seventeen years later, in a revisioning of her classic essay, Mohanty (2003) reflects on what she has learned from her positionality as well as from the responses to her famous essay. She argues for the importance of thinking through the terms "one-thirds world" and "two–thirds world" (haves and have-nots) together with North-South. She wants to differentiate the undifferentiated "Third World woman" to demonstrate that Southern women, too, are divided by class, caste, and that, as there is deprivation in the North, there is opulence in the Third World (2003). This is a de-homogenizing move that resists the discursive impact of reducing all Southern women to the figure of a poor, rural peasant, and also calls diasporic and upper class and caste women to accountability in their own efforts to speak for the more marginalized women in their societies.

More recently, Mohanty (2013) recounts in *Signs* how her generative essay has travelled transnationally:

> The publication journey of "Under Western Eyes" is instructive. It was first rejected by *Signs*. One external reader complained, "Why did you waste my time on this essay? It says nothing of value!" The essay was subsequently published in 1986, in an issue dated 1984**,** by the Left literary/cultural studies journal *boundary 2*. It was immediately picked up and reprinted by the British feminist journal *Feminist Review* and simultaneously translated and published in German and Dutch feminist journals. "Under Western Eyes" thus made its way into the US feminist academy via Europe. Since its publication in 1986, "Under Western Eyes" has been reprinted in numerous anthologies of feminist, postcolonial, area, development, and cultural studies, and translated into more than twenty Asian, Latin American, and Western and Eastern European languages. In the past twenty-five years, this essay has traveled widely across disciplinary, national, and linguistic borders. It is used as required reading in numerous disciplines from anthropology and international relations to literary and visual studies. (p. 976)

In this reflective and theoretical essay Mohanty explores the use of "Under Western Eyes" by activists in different locations as well. She recounts how her paradigm-shifting article has been both effectively applied by marginalized women in many national contexts and misread in de-politicizing ways by dominant women. (Note the role of translation in the dissemination of her ideas transnationally.)

While "Under Western Eyes" did not introduce the term TF, it began the process of critiquing the cross-border flow of feminist thought and analyses, and racist and colonialist assumptions about Third World Women and their agency. It questioned homogenizing representations through a Eurocentric lens, and interrupted simplistic calls for global sisterhood based upon the common bonds of patriarchal oppression. Mohanty gestured to a more

internationalist, intersectional analysis that looked at the specificities of differently located women's situations. She also raised serious questions about Western feminist assumptions and scholarship about Third World Women and their agency. It was a paradigm-shifting intervention that by asking certain kinds of questions laid the ground for ensuing postcolonial and transnational feminist critique. Mohanty's essay was foundational to the academic feminist discourse of "TF." Despite Mohanty's own level of movement engagement, her texts' influence in both academic and activist circles internationally, TFS as an emerging field, does not center activist knowledges.

5.2 Gayatri Spivak: "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

The second seminal text that exposed Western academic knowledge production's complicity with political and economic aspects of a (neo)colonial agenda was Gayatri Spivak's (1988) oft-cited "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak's intervention explored the conditions of intelligibility for Third World and other subaltern voices by interrogating key male thinkers like Marx and Foucault on the Eurocentric and colonialist aspects of their thought. If the answer to Spivak's question has often been interpreted as "no," then surely the presumed interlocutors have been Western academics. It is in interventions such as this that the decolonizing impulse behind some postcolonial feminist critique has been defused by a recentering of Western based scholars and a deflection away from Third World Women's conversations with each other. Such conversations include those by TFA that cross cultural, national, and linguistic borders. Spivak's groundbreaking article was published in 1988, three years after the end of the UN Decade for Women during which Northern and Southern feminists clashed over their differing analyses of women's oppression. In that period, South-South dialogues and alliances had emerged, such as Development Alternatives for Women Network (DAWN) in 1984. These initiatives advanced a

Southern feminist critique of development policy and global governance, which has had enormous influence and circulated widely. Spivak's article was not, however, centrally concerned with how oppressed women speak to other women about their own situations and struggles. Spivak's target was nothing less than foundational Western epistemological practices. Her work raised questions about transnational knowledge production politics without specifically using the term transnational or transnational feminism. It also implies a kind of silencing of marginal and southern women's voices in Western scholarship at a time when Southern activists were deeply engaged in dialogue with each other in international forums, yet reminds us of the cleavages between Southern cosmopolitan elites, middle class NGO workers, and subaltern women have not been transcended.

5.3 Chandra Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres: *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*

The next intervention was the influential anthology *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (1991) co-edited by the "Common Differences" conference co-organizers Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres. This volume, like the conference, included a movement-focus. Mohanty conceived of the project as mapping the conceptual landscape, however partially, for Third World feminist thought (1991, p. 3). The volume introduced Third World feminist theorizing – albeit largely through the eyes of diasporic, immigrant, and women of color scholars working in the western academy (p. 328-330) – and linked such theorizing to social movement struggles. It includes articles on poor women's collective production of knowledge, debates at a 1985 Maghreb women's conference, and other grounded accounts of women's and/or feminist knowledge production (Barroso & Brushini, 1991; Accad, 1991). This was an important effort to decolonize academic feminist knowledge production by foregrounding the work of North

American based scholars and scholar-activists who worked on feminist thought in non-US contexts. Some of the activism referred to was itself transnational, some was more locally or nationally framed, but it was brought into a transnational dialogue with Western-based scholars. In this volume activist knowledges are addressed. While the case studies in this model did not really take root and shape subsequent scholarship, this volume remains an important precursor to the more movement-engaged streams of TFS.

5.4 Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan: *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*

Another foundational transnational feminist anthology appeared in 1994: *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices,* co-edited by Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan. The collaborative work of renowned postcolonial feminist scholars Grewal and Kaplan (1994), who coined the term "scattered hegemonies" to offer an intersectional analysis of the multiple, intersecting systems of oppression as they manifest in particular contexts, has been hugely influential. With "scattered hegemonies," Grewal and Kaplan offered a conceptual framework that effectively displaced models that saw universal patriarchy/gender as the primary axis of oppression. Universalist understandings of gender and feminisms are two of the hallmarks of the academic discourse of global sisterhood/global feminisms from which postcolonial theorists seek to part company.

One of Grewal and Kaplan's key questions in *Scattered Hegemonies* is: "How do we understand the production and reception of diverse feminisms within a framework of transnational social/cultural/economic movements?" (1994, p.3). Grewal and Kaplan's intervention is centered on postmodern theoretical, literary interrogations of modernity and feminist thought's complicity with modernist discourses. Their critiques targeted not just

transnational patriarchies and capitalism ("scattered hegemonies") but also North American feminist discourses about women "elsewhere," particularly in the Third World.

Their approach differs from Mohanty's in terms of its literary emphasis as well as its commitment to postmodern critique. All three of these influential postcolonial theorists question Western epistemology, and all are particularly concerned with transnationalizing and democratizing *feminist* theory. Grewal and Kaplan are concerned with how feminist thought and alliances function across borders, and value transnationalism: "In attempting to work across *differences in culture, discipline, and profession,* we have found that the transnational links we advocate in this collection are a crucial part of the condition of feminist thinking, working, and writing [emphasis added]" (1991, p. 2). All of the articles in this volume, but one, are by American university-based scholars.

Interestingly, even though their scholarship has been less influenced by close relations to TF movements and their knowledges *per se*, Grewal and Kaplan do acknowledge movements as an important site of feminist knowledge production: "[t]he most path-breaking and exciting articulations of feminism seemed to us to be emerging from work done by our peers in ethnic, regional, cultural and women's studies as well as by activists in First World and Third World locations" (1994, p.1). In their introduction they take inspiration from some activist coalitions such as Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) and The Asian Women's Shelter group in San Francisco. However, their Humanities-oriented volume includes more focus on the analysis of literary texts than discussion of movements as sites of knowledge generation. This is what Catherine Orr (2012) refers to as an "invocation" of activism.

Grewal and Kaplan, in this and subsequent work, focus on how concepts travel, and are used, and refer to such acts as "practices": "[t]o begin, we want to explore how crucial terms and

concepts circulate. … We argue that the way terms get co-opted constitutes a form of practice" (1994, p.2). Indeed, the expression "transnational feminist practices" is linked to Grewal and Kaplan's foundational critique. By defining practices as the conceptual work of theorists, Grewal and Kaplan opened a line of inquiry about how feminist thought travels transnationally, albeit in ways which recenter the North American-based feminist, academic, citational knowledge production, and decenter movement activists elsewhere. However, this emphasis can also create a possibility of acknowledging activist knowledge-making practices. We will see in the next chapter a more detailed critique of the praxical nature of scholarship vis-à-vis TFA.

5.5 Chandra Mohanty and Jacqui Alexander: *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*

In 1997 Mohanty and Jacqui Alexander co-edited another important anthology that acknowledged and included movements, entitled *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures*:

> The experiences, histories, and self-reflections of feminists of color and Third-World feminists remain at the center of the anthology, but geopolitical shifts in the particular forms of globalization over the last decade necessitate an active, deliberate focus on questions of genealogies, legacies, and futures in comparative feminist praxis. We have, therefore, deliberately chosen to map these specific paths by which feminist communities, organizations, and movements call up and reflect upon moments in their own collective histories and struggles for autonomy. (p. xv-xvi)

This emphasis on movement practices and the related acknowledgement of movements as sites of counter-hegemonic knowledge production is a hallmark of Mohanty and Alexander's volume, and subsequent collaborative writings (2010). Mohanty (2013) is cautious about the excesses of

postmodern critique, seeing it as too neatly dovetailing with neoliberal dictates in the current academic climate. She later urges systemic analyses and maintaining ties to movements as ways to resist the depoliticization or recolonization of knowledge production (Mohanty, 2013). This text models a more movement-engaged academic scholarship that no doubt influences the openness to TFA that later comes to mark some TFS (Mohanty & Alexander, 2010).

In conclusion, scholars such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak, and Inderpal Grewal draw upon their familiarity with postcolonial contexts of struggle as well as with American academic (feminist) literatures to name and challenge the colonialist and imperialist complicities of Western feminism. They exposed such complicities in North American feminist discourses, methodologies, and politics. The field of postcolonial feminisms emerged and led to sustained interest in "transnational feminisms" understood primarily as a theoretical/conceptual framework for the intersectional, comparative, relational, transnational study of practices and power relations, including those between women.

When traced citationally, "transnational feminisms" are understood both discursively as well as in terms of their practices, and mainly as a theoretical framework or analytic emerging from these texts. That these authors took inspiration from transnational exchanges, and reference movement activism is significant. It does not mean however, that there is or was a marked shift in the research foci or citational praxis of TFS more generally. TFA are not necessarily an object of analysis, nor are movement knowledges that are generated outside of North America cited substantially or regularly in the emerging body of academic TFS literature. The foundational texts here are often-cited, but tellingly IF/GF scholarship, which is more likely to consider TF social movements, cites Mohanty more often than Grewal and Kaplan. A commitment to the practice of ongoing dialogue with multilingual movement knowledges is still needed.

6. W(h)ither Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA)? The Case for a Movement-Centered Rethinking of Transnational Feminisms/t Studies (TF/S)

My interest in this project has been in exploring *how* TFA remains repeatedly invoked yet not fully acknowledged as a site of knowledge production on par with TFS. Gestures and invocations towards TFA are found in TF scholarship, but have not substantially altered knowledge practices shaping TFS. If activism functioned as a touchstone within the North American academy as feminist theory and WGS developed, why has it not done so in the development of TF thought? Above, I identified familiar academic knowledge practices as part of the problem.

How have TFA been engaged in this process? TFS has so far developed with transnational movements as an occasional object of study and very rarely are TFA approached as a viable, alternative site of knowledge production. We have seen that TFA functions as inspiration and an object of study for *some* scholars, whereas for others, transnational feminisms signals a theoretical or conceptual framework used to look at various phenomenon, unrelated to its activist roots or meanings. A much smaller subset of scholars look through the lens of TF at TFA. If that lens could be widened to incorporate interdisciplinary engagement with SML, and if TFA/K could be part of the collective knowledge making dialogue, rather than simply an object of inquiry, then a compelling new direction for a sub-field focused explicitly in TFA could be made.[72]

Aside from the promise of such a focus for a sub-field, there remain compelling reasons to inform the wider TF scholarship with movement insights. What advantages might there be to a stronger focus on, and collaborative dialogue with, TF social movements for scholars of transnational feminisms? Why might TFS scholars rethink their relationship to movements?

Suffice it is to say at this point, that a movement-centered engagement of TF thought could address some of the questions that haunt this discussion, such as:

• How have the insights from postcolonial histories on the central role of education as a tool of both colonization and decolonization been overlooked?

• How has North American Women's Studies, born out of the women's movement, with particularly strong links to the popular educational model of Consciousness Raising (CR), a discipline demonstrating a major preoccupation with pedagogy, learning, praxis, and experiential learning, not contributed any sustained insight into the pedagogical nature of transnational feminist activisms and the roles of learning in activist knowledge production? Why has direction not been regularly sought from TFA?

• How is it that the role and site of transnational feminist organizing as/for knowledge production has only been attended to in case studies and not significantly informed the theoretical and methodological TF literature?

TF activists who work in these milieus have understandings of the work they do that may or may not draw upon North American TF academic analyses. They are often developing their own contextualized analyses of the struggles that they face in dialogue with each other, stakeholders, and affected populations. When people resist oppression, successfully or unsuccessfully, it is often because they have experiences, understandings, and strategies (i.e. theories that inform practice). In chapter 7, we will see that TFA involves a form of intellectual work that proceeds more loosely than academic knowledge production, which is not to say that the insights of TF activists are any less compelling. Grassroots groups use both "everyday theorizing" and collective knowledge practices to develop their analyses and strategies (Cairns & Sears, 2010). I want to emphasize that on-the-ground/on-the-web collective movement

knowledges develop is shaped by *contexts of struggle and their epistemological practices*. I have demonstrated that the context (site) of struggle within which knowledges are produced rather than the identities (as academic, activist, or scholar-activist) of the knowledge producers is a determinant of how oppositional knowledges are produced.

Certain priorities and commitments in academic and activist environments lead to different knowledge practices and different understandings of TF. TFS and TFA present different ways to "do feminisms" transnationally. Transnational feminist activists and postcolonial theorists are often troubled by the same power dynamics between women, dynamics that are racialized, classed, and neocolonial. Yet, TFA and TFS knowledge production strategies give rise to different approaches to resistance. Scholars who base their arguments on critiques of texts, practice a form of citational theorizing, write articles and books, design courses, and deliver conference papers as a way of intervening. Activists who argue face-to-face with other women in international forums, may form exclusive networks, opt in or out of various collective advocacy campaigns, and otherwise produce knowledges in struggle. Grassroots groups do not always leave a tidy paper trail. NGOization of TFA, on the other hand, leaves an easily accessible cyber trail. One can now easily find the more professionalized world of TFA knowledges online. In this context, it is all the more important to be able to bracket certain knowledges and engage others.

I contend that, as TF/S develop, scholars must better attend to activist knowledge production, not only as an object of critical study, but as a unique form of knowledge. Movements are important sites for the development of new knowledges and practices that can challenge imperialism, neocolonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy, in their scattered and united forms. The knowledge generated in movement contexts can inform academic theory and should

not to be limited to case study research, which tends to be marginalized in theoretical discussions. Not all of these rich ideas born in the messy world of struggle find their way into citable texts or Youtube clips.

Scholars in the field of TFS must ask how do we, how can we, cite activist knowledge production? (Briggs, 2008). This re-orientation towards activist knowledges has implications for reading practices, citational praxis, collaborative projects, and other transnational exchanges between academics and activists, universities and communities in resistance. Accordingly, chapter 6 will examine more closely how scholars engage TFA *knowledges*. In chapter 7, I will show how TF scholars can learn from activist epistemologies. A focus on movements and activist knowledges helps us to see *how* not just why oppositional practices emerge, as well as how they are subsumed or appropriated by hegemonic, academic, and /or NGOized forms of knowledge.

Scholars and activists need to understand how the relations of ruling infiltrate and co-opt relations of resistance through knowledges, discourses, workshops, and other means. Centering the study of activist epistemologies grounds us in experiences and experiential learning, the particulars of which are sorely missing from much TF theoretical and methodological writing. This deprives scholars of insights gleaned from praxis-based reflections on the learning done in activist contexts. Some TF scholars realize this: Sonia Alvarez (1998, 2000) and Maylei Blackwell (in Dubois, 2005) both argue that movements lead the way in strategy and knowledge production. As Blackwell says,

> It's an exciting time to be thinking and writing and researching about interconnecting these large, macro processes of global political economy to daily lived reality. And we're

> in a really exciting time politically where social movements are already doing this work if we can keep up with them.[73] (as cited in Dubois, 2005)

It is time to heed the call to follow movements in an effort to re-invigorate the decolonizing potential of TF/S.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the overarching question: how is/was the emergence of TF/S socially and conceptually organized through familiar academic knowledge practices? A second question has been: how have these knowledge practices impacted scholarly orientations to TFA? Within these questions lies a key to understanding the social and conceptual organization of the predominant North American academic approaches to TF. I identify the impact of the seemingly unremarkable daily academic knowledge practices such as selecting certain key academic texts to read and cite. These knowledge practices are used to debate definitions, coin terms, and advance theory.

When the choice of cited and referenced texts are overwhelmingly academic, I refer to this as citational theorizing. I do so to remind the reader of other more empirical and movement-engaged possibilities that are pushed out by the ubiquity and obviousness of these conventional knowledge practices (see Namaste, 2009 for an example). A ruling in of certain academic texts, frames and knowledges, and a ruling out of both older frames (IF,GF) and of the harder to cite, more amorphous TFAK is accomplished surreptitiously through these practices. In the context of TF scholarship, I argue that this is a form of scholarly overwriting of activist knowledges.

I have discussed the ways in which the definitions used in disciplinary and interdisciplinary conversations carry implications for and in a sense organize scholarly stances towards TF/A. These kinds of effects are referred to as citational disciplining. The field-building

accrual of academic knowledge practices such as citational practices, definitional debates, and frame replacement are highlighted as part of how, actually, TF emerged so evidently on the North American academic horizon, yet with little so explicit interlocution with TFA.

Three meanings of TF are explored in this chapter and their implied orientations are named through textual analysis. When TF refers to TFA, scholars see an object of analysis. When scholars use TF as a lens, its function as a theoretical framework is foregrounded. When TFS is understood as an emerging field, it beckons with opportunities to publish, conference, design courses, and research. I believe that the argument that TFS is now a (sub)field is tenable due to the wide range of institutional and knowledge practices – from publishing and conferencing, to teaching and funding research – that have been engaged from the TF framework. In this chapter I have provided a textual analysis of how the phenomenon of TFA is taken up (or not) in North American academic scholarship, as the framework of TF and the field of TFS develop.

To understand the emergence of TFA one has to grasp, at the very least, the broader historical context of TANs, ICTs, UN conferences on women, and globalization. In other words, one has to situate the constellation of social relations, ruling relations, and relations of resistance historically and sociologically. It is clear from the discussion above that transnational feminist scholarship was developed both in response to some of these historical developments, such as globalization, and in concert with a cross-disciplinary investment in the paradigm of transnationalisms. Yet, TF/S has been developed less in dialogue with transnational feminist activists than one might expect. TF/S also developed citationally, being uniquely grounded in the visionary, postcolonial, antiracist feminist scholarship of North American- based scholars, many

of whom were diasporic, immigrant, and of color. These two categories of sites – movement-based and academic – are home to different and differently valued epistemologies.

TF seems poised to achieve more than (sub)field status, and is arguably effecting a kind of paradigm-shifting impact on feminist scholarship and on WGS. The potential decolonizing impact of TF, however, has been blunted by the inadvertent nationalism of its uptake in North American academy. This recentering of North America as a site of transnational feminist praxis and knowledge production is at odds with the decolonizing, democratizing impulse that motivated/s many early and contemporary TF scholars.

Transnational feminist knowledges produced in activist sites matter. If academic knowledge production on TF is to be decentered, even in episodic ways, let alone decolonized, we need more that gestures towards an invocation of transnational feminist activisms. Attention to reading, research, and citational practices as well as rethinking of interlocutors is called for. We need serious engagement with TF thought born of different and often looser, multi-sited, multi-lingual, movement-sited knowledge practices. In the next chapter I examine recent TF literature on TFA, paying close attention to scholarly orientations towards transnational feminist activist *knowledges.*[74]

CHAPTER 6: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF ORIENTATIONS TOWARDS TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ACTIVIST KNOWLEDGES (TFAK) IN RECENT TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP (TFS)

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The previous chapter explains different meanings, functions, and implications of the term transnational feminisms, and analyses how TFA was treated within discussions of TF/S. In this chapter I look at how North American-based TF scholars engage with transnational feminist activist *knowledges* rather than transnational feminist *activisms, per se.* This choice is informed by the analysis from the previous chapter, which exposes how academic knowledges are recentered and prioritized through citational practices. My methodological framework guides me to bracket institutional and theoretical accounts of the development of TF/S and to assure that (TFA) members' knowledges are kept in view. I defamiliarize and counter the effects of citational theorizing and citational disciplining by paying close attention to how TFA and their knowledges fare within the academic literature. Curiously, despite increasing attention to TFA, we will see in this chapter that the scholarship does not evince a stronger engagement with transnational feminist activist *knowledges*, as such. Below, I continue with my exploration of how scholarly orientations towards TFAK are socially and conceptually organized. I ask *how*, *actually*, is it that scholars orient towards movement-generated knowledges as TFA receives greater attention within TF scholarship?[75] Given what I found, I am also curious as to how this engagement with TFAK has remained quite truncated and piecemeal. In keeping with the methodological tenets drawn from Institutional Ethnography and Political Activist Ethnography, in this chapter, I conduct a textual analysis of selected TFS academic literature, read as data.

Below, I define transnational feminist activist knowledges, justify my choice of literature, and then explain how my methodological tenets inform the analysis which follows. In the subsequent section, I present a preliminary "typology" of four orientations to TFAK, identifying

the knowledge practices used and what they imply for and about North American TF scholarship.

1. Siting and Defining Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledges (TFAK)

By transnational feminist activist knowledges (TFAK), I refer to knowledges produced by transnational feminist/women's groups. As this dissertation presents a preliminary articulation and analysis of TFAK, I cast my net wide considering multiple sites of movement knowledges, including ideas and texts by grassroots groups, professionalized transnational advocacy networks, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs), and other TFA sites.[76]

My use of the term "transnational feminist activist knowledges" is not meant to reify or imply an existing unified body of, or approach to, knowledge. The insistent "K" at the end of TFA*K* is meant to invite curiosity about non-university based TFA epistemological practices. The reappearance of the pesky "s" is meant as a reminder of the diversity, unevenness, and struggles of and over these knowledge*s*. Despite the risk of reification through the use of an acronym, for the sake of readability, I will sometimes use TFAK to refer to transnational feminist activist knowledges. For variety I will also use the terms "activist knowledges" and "movement knowledges." The reader is asked to interpret these terms in the broadest sense and to remember that movement knowledges are *not* to be idealized as less problematic in terms of how existing hegemonic power relations can shape their production. *Activist knowledges* might be found in discourses, frames, key concepts, theories, analyses, campaign ideas, workshops, or conferences. *Activist texts* include NGO publications, case studies, action plans, reports, web sites, newsletters, essays, book chapters, pedagogical materials, emails, blogs, web video clips of

conference sessions, talks, meetings, memoires of activists, and other forms of movement literature.

Before beginning my analysis, I must acknowledge a few assumptions that inform my exploration of the disjuncture between TFS and TFA. I work from the assumption that movement *knowledges* matter, in terms of the ideas generated, the knowledge practices employed in TFA sites, and because they are at the forefront of many on-the-ground attempts to challenge oppression. Based upon my experiential knowledge of TFA and my reading of the SML scholarship, I assume that movements *can be, but are not necessarily,* incubators of cutting edge analyses and oppositional practices. I operate from an experientially informed belief that ideas produced in struggle are often generated differently from academic scholarship.[77] I want to emphasize the epistemological specificities of knowledges *sited in movement-based contexts of struggle*, without homogenizing or idealizing activist knowledges. Social movements are not necessarily more equitable contexts of knowledge production. I do not want to dismiss the tensions between the complex, divergent ideas and knowledge practices of grassroots movements, TANs, NGOs, and more radical groups and networks. I acknowledge that such knowledges might draw from, challenge, or ignore North American academic feminist knowledges. I believe that the processes (epistemologies) through which TFA analyses and strategies (knowledges and practices) are generated are important intellectual and theoretical resources not just for social movements, but also for scholars. Only recently have transnational feminist activist *knowledges* (TFAK) begun to be addressed as such more explicitly, and only by a few scholars of TF such as Mohanty & Alexander (2010), Conway (2010, 2011, 2013).

2. Textual Analysis of Recent Scholarship on Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA)

In the textual analysis which follows, I will examine what a small body of North American TF scholarship on TFA reveals about scholarly orientations to activist knowledge and activist texts. In my early encounter with the North American academic literature on transnational feminisms, I was taken aback by the marginal role transnational activisms seemed to play in guiding the field's priorities and political and epistemological concerns. Eventually, the scattered invocations of cross-border feminist movements coalesced into edited scholarly volumes with a stronger emphasis on TFA. The publication of three such volumes from different inter/disciplinary perspectives in one year (2010) is taken as evidence that a clear focus on TFA has arrived within TFS. I use this "moment" of transnational feminist activisms' arrival in anthologized form as my case study.

The three edited collections that I examine are: *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis* edited by Richa Nagar and Amanda Swarr (2010); *Women's movements in Asia: Feminisms and transnational activism* edited by Mina Roces and Louise Edwards (2010); and *Solidarities beyond borders: Transnationalizing women's movements* edited by Dominique Caouette, Dominique Masson and Pascale Dufour (2010). Each volume grew out of an academic seminar, workshop, or conference at which the dearth of methodological, disciplinary, regional, and case study scholarship on TFA was addressed. These gatherings are forms of social organization which facilitate conceptual organization.

In this chapter, I conduct a textual analysis of approaches to TFAK in this literature and assess their impact upon the field of TFS. I choose most of my examples from these recent anthologies on TFA, supplementing them with some exemplary texts. I am particularly interested in how movement knowledges and activist texts are approached in this literature. I will show

how their treatment is socially and conceptually organized through conventional and subversive academic knowledge practices.

Conducting the textual analysis in this chapter involved learning to read scholarship differently. My second methodological tenet directs me to read for the social relations of TF academic knowledge production about TFA. My third methodological principle suggests the bracketing of disciplinary and institutional narratives of transnational feminisms. Thus, I consciously shift my reading focus away from the more typical concern of following (inter)disciplinary debates. I do not engage critically with the analyses and lines of argument presented in these academic studies of TFA networks, movements, organizational practices, and events, unless my analysis of how activist *knowledges/texts* are used therein necessitates it. Even the position I take on the question of whether TFS is a field, is informed by the analysis of how certain constellations of academic practices can be read, rather than developed in agreement with a particular argument presented in the literature. To read academic literature in a conventional and critical manner can both obfuscate members' knowledge (Smith, G., 2006) and normalize academic stances to these activist knowledges. My aim here is to defamiliarize and to accomplish a clear focus on members' knowledges and on scholarly orientations to these activist knowledges. In my project, the members' knowledge that I seek to make more visible is that of transnational feminist activists. Readers may recall that George Smith's political activist ethnography demands that members' knowledge, too, be bracketed. My focus is on, as Campbell and Gregor say, "what activities this particular account supports, or alternately, makes invisible" rather than content as such (2004, p. 53). In this chapter I am not exploring how activist knowledges are social organized, but rather *how the uptake of such knowledges by North*

American-based scholars is organized. I leave for the next chapter the question of the import, veracity, and quality of activist knowledges.

Through this textual analysis, certain epistemological practices of TFS are highlighted – and defamiliarized – in order to reveal their impact upon TFAK and their uptake within TFS. Scholarly stances towards activist knowledges are, as we will see, often built into TF scholarship due to disciplinary, citational, publishing, collaboration, and research practices. This chapter will show how the disjuncture that I named at the outset – that between TFS and TFA – is in part maintained through specific taken-for-granted and contested academic epistemological practices, outlined below.

In this chapter, I use activist knowledges and texts not as objects of analysis but to direct my attention to the social relations of the academic literature. This means that I examine textual evidence of scholarly knowledge practices such as: citations, reference lists, bibliographies, the languages used in reference lists, and objects of research/analysis. I look at models of North-South and academic-activist collaborative praxis, as well as scholars' stated and unstated relationship to activists' tacit or experiential knowledges. I consider scholars' acknowledgement of activist expertise and their intellectual work, meaning both their outputs and their intellectual labour. Also addressed are movement-centered genealogies and theorizing from activist communications.

3. Identifying Academic Knowledge Practices and their Functions as Social/ Conceptual Organizers and Field-Building Mechanisms

What has been revealed so far are the outlines of *how* the emergence of TF in the North American academy is socially and conceptually organized through everyday academic practices. In this chapter, my analysis engages TF knowledge production practices from a different, but

complementary angle to much of the existing TF scholarship. In the last chapter we saw that TFS has produced compelling analyses of the broader political, economic, historical, and institutional factors shaping the rise of activist and academic interest in the transnational. The various impacts of neoliberalism, imperialism, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and other overarching systems of oppression have been well theorized in these TFS works. My analysis can be situated alongside these theoretical arguments, for it shares many of their concerns. My focus, however, is on the incremental impact of day-to-day North American academic and disciplinary knowledge practices. In this chapter, I analyze some textual evidence that points to how other taken-for-granted academic knowledge practices can coalesce to sideline or overwrite movement knowledges, even when transnational feminist activisms, practices, and sites are taken as objects of analysis or invoked as epistemologically significant.

The conceptual and social vista of transnational feminisms' academic emergence is one of a constellation of routine and subversive academic knowledge practices. My analysis of orientations towards TFAK exposes the impact of everyday scholarly knowledge practices, including: establishing canonical texts through citational practices; defining key concepts; naming and developing theoretical frameworks; consulting style guides; selecting materials and compiling reference lists; translating (or not) the titles of vernacular activist texts; choice of primary data; reliance of scholarly accounts of TFA; referring to bibliographies to find sources; employing inter/disciplinary methodologies and methods; planning and attending conferences, workshops, and seminars; conducting literature reviews so as to situate one's own work; drafting calls for papers (CFPs); articulating conference themes; producing anthologies or special journal issues; undertaking collaborative projects; creating equitable conditions for collaboration with activist partners despite institutional constraints; acknowledging activist labor, expertise,

experiential knowledges, and their own priorities for learning and skill building; generating theory citation ally from activist texts; using movement-engaged genealogical methods; and other familiar academic knowledge practices.

I argue that these everyday knowledge practices have subtle and not so subtle ways of directing attention back towards particular lines of inquiry, canonical texts, thinkers, and the site of North American academic knowledge production. Despite some protest from scholars who don't want to see transnational feminisms championed as a sanitized version of global sisterhood (Grewal and Kaplan, 2000) or TFS declared as a united field (Swarr and Nagar, 2010), the reality is that as CFPs and job ads increasingly target transnational feminisms, as publishers see an interest, as edited volumes and book length studies emerge, as more courses are offered, as student interest increases, so the makings of a sub-field, at the very least, are born. Therefore, I argue that these academic knowledge practices have functioned as field-building mechanisms in the case of TF due to the density of their interconnections, the timing of a surge in cross-disciplinary interest in the transnational, and the short time frame in which they transpire/d.[78]

As we saw in the last chapter, a new framework or field such as TF can emerge when: a) there is a socio-historical or political-economic shift of great import; b) a paradigm shift occurs within a field due to exceptional and influential scholarship/theory; or c) a gap in a field is noticed. The North American discourse of transnational feminisms was a response to all of these factors. The field-building mechanisms which I have identified include: a) *texts*, such as calls for papers, job ads, syllabi, and edited volumes on TFA; b) the *knowledge practices* used to generate these texts, such as referencing and citational practices; c) other *social practices*, such as conferencing, forming readings groups, and curriculum revision. I do not discuss all of these, but I do note them here to indicate the ways in which my methodological framework can re-orient

the researcher's approaches to certain texts, that is seeing how they socially and conceptually organize academic practices. In the case of TF scholarship, I argue that there is a particular constellation that indicates that TFS is a new field of inquiry. There is evidence of a sub-field with North American transnational feminist scholarship focused upon TFA as well. I turn now to my analysis of orientations to TFAK in some recent TFS literature.

4. Main Orientations to Transnational Feminist Activist Knowledges (TFAK) in Transnational Feminist Scholarship (TFS)

A textual analysis of the academic literature reveals important insights about the social and conceptual organizations of the TFS orientation toward TFA *knowledges*. In reviewing the literature, four main approaches to TFAK production are found. They are discussed below in order of the quality of their engagement with TFAK. First, I begin by acknowledging that in the wider TFS literature, signs of engagement with TFAK are often entirely absent. Second, I name and discuss the tendency in some social science literature on TFA to relate to TFAK, particularly activist texts, *as data*. Third, I examine the collaborative research praxis model for its strengths and weaknesses, and note how it implicitly acknowledges activists' tacit and experiential knowledges as well as their intellectual labor. Fourth, I analyze what I consider to be the most promising approach, which is to take TFA knowledges themselves, rather than TFA groups or campaigns, as the object of analysis.

Before beginning my analysis, a caveat: I am not suggesting that these orientations or approaches are necessarily taken up consciously. In fact, their embeddedness in daily scholarly knowledge practices means that they are so routine and familiar as to often go without notice. The way in which these orientations to TFAK are shaped by conventional scholarly knowledge practices will be shown below. The work of defamiliarization that I am doing is intended to help

identify some predominant means of engaging TFAK in TFS so that scholars better understand how these different orientations to activist knowledges might impact the disjuncture between the worlds and epistemologies of TFA and TFS more broadly. The role played by certain texts in directing or activating research and theory building, as introduced in the previous chapter, will be elaborated upon.

4.1 First Orientation: TFAK Are Absent

In much of the wider TFS literature, activisms are not discussed nor are movement intellectual works cited. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, in the predominant approach to TFS, transnational feminisms is not understood as referring to TFA, but rather to a theoretical or conceptual framework which informs NA scholarship. This is not necessarily a problem, as the focus of such research is often quite removed from movement concerns.[79] I mention this absence to remind readers that a connection to TFA is not definitive within the broader body of scholarship that uses the term "transnational feminisms."

While an absence isn't easy to prove, I offer an example of search results from the popular EBSCO Academic Search Complete database. I searched for the terms "transnational feminis*" and "activis*" to show the relative number of publications found for entries which use both of these terms or only "transnational feminis*." As can be seen in the chart below, among the number of publications that address "transnational feminis*," publications that also address "activis*" are far fewer. In this sample, articles which refer to activism account for at most one-third and as little as about one-tenth of this sample.

Search results from all types of texts in Academic Search Complete database, Ebsco Host. (Conducted August 18, 2012).		
Academic Search Complete Search Criteria	"transnational feminis*" AND activis*	"transnational feminis*" NOT activis*
Title	6	80

Abstract or Author-supplied Abstract	45	140
Author-supplied Key Words	4	37

I do not want to belabor this absence in the broader literature. Rather, I want to reiterate that transnational feminist activisms has not played central a role in the development of TFS. What this means given the strong guiding role that North American feminist activisms have had in the development of feminist scholarship, will be addressed in the conclusion of the dissertation. In the anthologies on TFA which are examined below, transnational feminist activisms are central. Below, I present three orientations to transnational feminist activist *knowledges* found within scholarship that explicitly addresses TFA.

4.2 Second Orientation: TFAK Are Used as (Primary) Data

The second and most common approach to knowledge produced in TFA contexts is to use it as *data*. When I use the term "data," I am referring to raw material, primary evidence, or pieces of information from which the scholar builds her analysis. These bits of information can be extracted from TFA texts, discourses, and practices, or from interviews with activists, among other sources. In such research, the "object of analysis," would normally be TFA NGOs, networks, women's groups, forums, events, campaigns, social movements, or activism/s. However, within my categorization of approaches to TFA knowledges, I am analyzing how scholars relate to the *knowledges* produced, not how scholars orient themselves to *activisms per se*. Accordingly, my categorization is not based solely upon the author's stated object of analysis. Within the analysis that I am advancing, *the difference between using activist knowledges as data and as an object of analysis hinges upon the stance or approach which the scholar takes towards activist knowledges and their epistemological specificities*. In the fourth approach

below, for which I argue that TFAK are approached as objects of analysis, I emphasize that activist knowledges themselves are the *explicit* research foci.

In this section, I attempt to demonstrate that even when TFA groups, processes, projects, or discourses are the units studied, movement knowledges are often reduced to functioning *as data*. My analysis shows that TFAK are relegated to a secondary position vis-à-vis academic knowledges, and that these movement knowledges are often disassembled into pieces of information in a way that ruptures their epistemic integrity and/or misrecognizes their epistemologies. Moreover, secondary literature – academic research – plays a stronger role in informing this kind of research on TFA, contributing to what I refer to as the overwriting of activist knowledges.

4.2.1 Disciplinary approaches. The above discussion implies that some conventional disciplinary *methods* organize scholars to approach TFAK as data. Arguably, that is the point of methods. However, in keeping with my effort to defamiliarize everyday academic knowledge practices, I will briefly consider sociological, political science, and historical research as examples of how disciplinary methods foster certain orientations to TFAK as data. For instance, the discipline of Political Science and the field of International Relations (IR) were initially slow to look at TFA, but recent feminist scholars have made some important in-roads (Peterson in Dubois et al, 2005). One of the first works in political science to take transnational (feminist) activisms seriously by documenting and analyzing the cross-border dimensions of women's anti-violence organizing practices was a comparative study of transnational advocacy networks (TANs) by Keck and Sikkink (1998), which set the stage for subsequent scholarly work. Their citations included a fair mix of academic, United Nations (UN), and activist texts and captured the vibrancy of activist thought. Seven years later, in 2005, feminist IR scholar Spike Peterson

lamented that the field of Political Science at that time still lacked interdisciplinary conversations about TFA and intersectional analyses (In Dubois et al, 2005). An interdisciplinary volume, *Solidarities beyond borders: Transnationalizing women's movements* edited by Dominique Caouette, Dominique Masson and Pascale Dufour (2010) seeks to integrate questions of place, scale, and space as well as insights from Women's Studies and critical Social Geography into International Relations (IR) and feminist interdisciplinary scholarship more broadly. The approach suggested by Dufour was to focus on *processes*, specifically on "what we call transnationalization of solidarities because this notion focuses on the processes by which transnationalization is produced in organizations, networks, events, and movements" (2010, p. 3). Due to its explicit focus on movements, this volume uses some activist knowledges as data.

Much sociological research takes networks, social movements, or transnational activism as units of analysis (Desai, 2007, para. 11). Some scholars focus on contextualizing theories, practices, and struggles, and assessing processes of coalition building across borders (Tohidi, para. 15 in Dubois et al, 2005). TFAK can serve as data to be used to develop these analyses.

Within the discipline of history, accounts of feminist movements, networks, organizations and activisms, biographies, and comparative studies of feminist thought are underway; but as historian Leila Rupp self-deprecatingly jests: "…we never talk about [methodology] in history, we just go to the archives, we read documents and we don't really think about what it is we are doing" (as cited in Dubois et al, 2005, para.16). Rupp outlines three scholarly historical approaches to research on transnational feminisms: a) archival research, b) syntheses of secondary works which require language competence because "if we read only things in one language then we won't necessarily get everything," and c) collaborative projects (para. 17-8). The use of primary sources is central to historical scholarship, so in the study of

transnational feminist movements and women's groups, archival documents of women's groups are often studied (see Rupp, 1997; and D'Itri, 1999 for example).

In social science research there is often an emphasis on documenting and analyzing the effectiveness, strategies, transformations, innovations, and accomplishments of past and present international women's organizations and transnational feminist networks (see for example Rupp 1997; Moghadam, 2005; D'Itri, 1999). Furthermore, *practices* are often the focus of study. By practices I mean the activities, actions, techniques and strategies undertaken by transnational activists; in short, what it is that activists do. These might include anything from organizing collective actions such as demonstrations, to everyday actions such as fund-raising, service provision, popular education, or information exchange. Practices can be used as data in both contemporary and historical research, even when they are accessed through archival texts. The words of historian Leila Rupp, from a roundtable discussion of disciplinary approaches to the study of transnational feminisms, resonate: "I have to say that my focus is on the organizing rather than sort of transnational feminist thought" (as cited in Dubois et al, 2005, para 12).

What are the implications of the texts and practices of TF activist networks and social movements being treated as data by social scientists?[80] I want to suggest that what these diverse disciplinary approaches have in common is that scholars research, document, or analyze the practices, processes, discourses, and texts of TFA as a kind of data, and that academic research and studies–what is called "the secondary literature" — actually has quite a primary place in social science scholarship on TFA. TFA texts and thought viewed here as primary sources are quite secondary in terms of the final scholarly product. This may seem like a familiar, and perhaps almost inevitable outcome of much scholarly practice and of the presumed audience and debates addressed by academics.

The researcher's expertise rests to some degree upon her ability to objectify the dynamic practices and ideas of transnational feminist groups into data. TFAK are broken down into bits of information about and/or from which scholars build their analyses. When scholars study activist practices, those practices are sometimes richly contextualized and scholars do benefit by subsuming the messy cacophony of TFA to their conceptual frameworks, theories, and taxonomies. However, they also risk extracting activist practices from the organic context of their emergence, only to re-situate them in service to the scholar's argument or analysis.

To focus primarily on practices, to disassemble primary sources into quotations and sound bites onto which the researcher imposes meaning, to downplay the relationship between practices and the knowledge processes in TFA: all of these knowledge practices reinforce Northern scholarly expertise at the expense of a more equitable engagement with TFAK. Such a practice enforces the idea that the Northern academic rightly occupies the role of expert knowledge producer (research- and theory-generators) erasing and overwriting forms of knowledge that are produced through the praxis being scrutinized. I would contend despite the professional benefits of these knowledge practices, scholars also lose out. By framing TFA primarily as a set of practices and processes to be documented, examined, analyzed, and theorized by academics, scholars truncate their own learning *from* (though not *about*) social movements.

4.2.2 Activist Texts are used as Data. One might fairly assume that if the discourses mobilized by activists are studied, an obvious method for accessing contemporary discourses would be to read activist texts such as newsletters, websites, advocacy materials, meeting notes, policy documents, reports, and pedagogical materials. In historical research, one might reasonably expect archival research for primary sources to be a central method of investigation

used to explore what "activists"[81] of the past were thinking (their ideas), and doing (their practices). Historian Leila Rupp's recommendation of three possible approaches to the study of international women's organizing – archival research, syntheses of multilingual secondary materials, and collaborative projects – suggests that vernacular texts are an important source of data for historians (2005, para. 17-8). Therefore, we might expect to see activist texts substantively incorporated into historical research. However, as the following investigation of how activist texts are treated within some contemporary historical scholarship will demonstrate, such is not necessarily the case.

How are the texts produced by activists taken up in recent historical scholarship on TFA? I will answer this question here by looking at a particular anthology: *Women's Movements in Asia: Feminisms and Transnational Activism,* which was designed to provide the first "comprehensive [historical] study of women's activism across Asia" through a set of national case studies (Roces & Edwards, 2010, p. 1). Accordingly, the editors aim to offer readers "a comprehensive bibliography of key works in the field" (back cover). To be fair, the editors of this volume, marketed for "courses on women and feminism in Asia" (back cover), likely chose to emphasize scholarly materials available in English. However, a strong presence of English language scholarly references should not preclude inclusion of vernacular writings by activists in a book on activism. Such introductory overviews and their bibliographies certainly influence how students and scholars new to the study of the region and/or TFA navigate the literature.

The book project grew out of "academic conference networking" between scholars and a Routledge editor and was somewhat collaborative in design (Roces & Edwards, 2010, p. vii). The editors played a central role, and each of the authors answered a set of common questions drafted to explore national differences as well as regional similarities in transnational activism.

This collection of historical case studies makes use of elements of all three methods suggested by Rupp: archival research, comparative study of vernacular texts, syntheses of multilingual secondary materials, as well as collaboration.

Below, I examined the types of texts *included as reference materials* in the chapters of this volume. As one might expect, reference materials listed in the text include interviews, government documents, archival materials, activist texts, and secondary materials in English and other languages. Proportionately, however, I found a dearth of references to activist texts.

The chapter on Japan (Maloney, 2010) includes in its list of 63 references, only 5 activist texts: 1 Christian women's group's document, 3 entries by a well-known pre-war feminist, and 1 reference to a book written by the feminist activist Yayori Matsui.[82] Furthermore, Matsui's one cited book was published by Zed Books in English for an international audience.[83] Only a handful of Japanese scholarly publications are cited. The author relies primarily upon Western scholarship published in English by North American university and academic presses (26 entries) and English language academic journals (19 entries).

In the bibliography of the chapter on Japan, Japanese titles are not written in *kanji* (Chinese characters) or *kana* (Japanese syllabary), but are romanized so that the interested non-Japanese reader can pronounce the titles. Translations of Japanese titles, however, are not offered consistently so that non-Japanese readers can at least understand them. Only 2 of 9 Japanese titles are translated. Chinese sources cited in the chapter on China are also not translated (Edwards, 2010), though Korean sources in the chapter on Korea are (Kim & Kim, 2010). What might account for this difference?

The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition (APA 6), suggests translation and transliteration for articles and books written in non-Latin script

languages such as these three East Asian languages. While the APA's citation guidelines do suggest the importance of communicating foreign language titles, such guidelines may be unevenly applied. Historians typical consider their presumed readers' interests or needs in making decisions on the translation of vernacular texts.[84] The Chicago Style website advises that in these cases: "you have to decide what your readers need and provide it. In other words, it's something for the writer and editor to work out." (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org).

What are the implications of these citational and translation practices for movement knowledges? When the titles of reference works are not translated, most Anglophone readers cannot even capture a glimpse of the ideas produced by Asian activists. Given the prevalence of English language secondary materials cited within *Women's movements in Asia: Feminisms and transnational activism*, the "primary" sources of native language activist texts, which scholars use to build their analyses, is relegated to a secondary position among sources of data. English academic sources are predominate in all cases. So, while the chapters do discuss TFA, and contain elements of the ideas and practices developed by activists, the reference list does not do justice to the central role of activist texts and practices, almost of necessity, given the context of publication. Since bibliographies and reference lists are often perused for sources as part of the research process, some students and scholars are likely to consult the reference list without reading the chapters.

It is this function of reference lists and bibliographies in the context of the development of a field that informs my choice to emphasize the role of bibliographies and reference lists as field-building mechanisms. These reference lists both reflect and create scholarly orientations to texts. I take this to be a form of social and conceptual organization. The content of a given reference list and the decision to translate titles are shaped by an interplay of publication style

guides (what institutional ethnographer Dorothy Smith might call an extra-local textual coordination of practices), disciplinary preferences, and scholars' and editors' choice of emphases. In this way, orientations to TFAK are subtly socially and conceptually organized by taken- for-granted scholarly knowledge practices.

Does the widespread use of English in South and Southeast Asia mean that the situation regarding the use of activist texts is different in those chapters? *Women's movements in Asia: Feminisms and transnational activism* includes chapters on India and the Philippines, two former colonized countries with strong women's movements. In both countries many English language publications by academics and activists are produced. Does the relative availability of English language sources mean that these chapters evince more reading of activist texts? Not necessarily. The chapter on India includes only 3 citations from a well-known Indian feminist press (Kali for Women) out of 69 references listed. Almost all citations are from Western university and academic presses and from sources published by the Delhi branches of big publishing houses, such as Oxford or Sage. Neither chapter includes texts in local languages, indicating that whatever differences between vernacular and English discourses exist are unlikely to make their presence felt in either of these chapters. Only the chapter on the Philippines has a substantial number of references to activist, NGO, governmental, and academic publications from the Philippines: 37 of 68 entries. These 68 entries also include 17 interviews. Given the strength, dynamism, and strong transnational linkages of women's labor and human rights groups in the Philippines, it is not surprising that the Filipino case study demonstrates a deeper engagement with movement-produced knowledges.

What is surprising – and disconcerting – is that such an uneven engagement with activist texts is found in the first comprehensive study of transnational feminist activisms in Asia. I am

interested in how activist knowledges are mobilized in TFS scholarship more broadly. While I expect an uneven treatment in TF scholarship that is less directly related to TFA, in anthologies that specifically focus upon TFA as an object of study, the stakes are higher. Anthologies play an important role in the emergence of a field, for scholars and students. They clearly perform a function of conceptual organization. Reference lists and bibliographies say something about the importance of texts and are a resource for scholars. While I am critical of the limited engagement of activist texts in this volume, I applaud the arrival of regionally focused work on TFA. Introductory syntheses of secondary literature are an important resource for students and scholars. This is even more significant when a volume takes a regional focus and provides an overview of countries that do not have a strong presence in the emerging field. Interestingly, despite the widespread use of English in the region, Asian feminisms have not been widely addressed within WGS or TFS. I think, therefore, that introductory anthologies and bibliographies and the seemingly mundane task of translating titles of vernacular texts are important forms of social and conceptual organization that functions as field-building mechanisms.

In this section on the second orientation to TFAK, I have argued that conventional academic knowledge practices such as choosing and consulting texts, entering them in bibliographies, choosing to translate titles or not, designing introductory level anthologies, especially on underrepresented areas of the world, all play a role in the social and conceptual organization of how TFA and their knowledges are approached in North American TF scholarship. I have also highlighted their role as field-building mechanisms that influence scholars, especially as a field emerging, given the dearth of similar works to consult.

While my analysis of the use of activist texts in one historical anthology of TFA is *not* meant to imply that all historical scholarship functions in this way, it does provide a clear example of researchers approaching TFAK *as data*. When the *practices* of TFA and the *ideas and analyses* of (mostly) Northern-based scholars are the main sources used and cited for research (in this case, on Asian feminisms), non-Western activist and movement intellectual work is needlessly overwritten. English language, North American scholarship is recentered. If the textual evidence of TFA knowledges is reduced to data, the binary of "activists do, scholars think" is reinforced. This inevitably bolsters the status of academic knowledge over and above activist knowledges. The next scholarly approach seeks to address this problem directly through collaboration.

4.3 Third Orientation: TFAK are Engaged in Collaborative Research Praxis

The third identifiable approach to TFA knowledges is exemplified in *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis (CTFP),* a volume of chapters collaboratively written by Northern-based researchers and Southern activist partners. The volume was edited by Amanda Swarr and Richa Nagar (2010). *CTFP* grew out of a workshop held in 2006 at the University of Minnesota. These collaborative research meetings involve collective knowledge practices and are sites of social and conceptual organization. "Transnational feminist collaborative praxis" is an intentional intervention into conventional academic knowledge production practices that is informed by postcolonial, antiracist, and poststructuralist feminist critiques. The contributors are "rethinking the meanings and possibilities of feminist praxis" and of three related binaries: "individually/collaboratively produced knowledges, academia/activism, and theory/method" (Swarr and Nagar, 2010, p. 2). In this volume, knowledge is developed as academics and activists collaboratively explore two main questions:

> a) [w]hat does it mean to "collaborate" in a feminist manner across national and other borders of difference in power?
>
> b) How can we think about "praxis" as the center of how we engage and understand collaboration across borders? (*CTFP* Contributors, 2010, p. 210)

Making praxis central is part of the project's larger agenda of destabilizing conventional binaries that support the status quo of knowledge hierarchies. The book jacket claims that *CTFP* will "set the 21st century agenda for political engagement through feminist scholarship" (back cover). The editor's introduction (Nagar & Swarr, 2010) and two theoretical essays (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010; J. Desai et al, 2010) in an opening section called "Decolonizing Transnational Feminisms" (p. v) articulate that vision as one that decolonizes North American academic feminist knowledge production.

What orientations to TFAK are seen, stated, or implied? In the *CTFP* approach, there is an explicit and conscious orientation towards activists as co-producers of knowledge. The approach involves situating Southern and diasporic activists/artists as partners to Northern-based academics in collaborative transnational *research* praxis. I emphasize research here, because while the authors tend to use the terms "collaborative praxis" and "transnational feminist praxis" interchangeably in the book, the praxis they discuss centers around *academic research*. (I will return to this point below.) Most of the collaborations involved working together to design, conduct, and write up joint research projects that benefits both sides.

While the contributors to *CTFP* emphasize praxis as a way to remove it from the beleaguered side of the academic/activist divide, they are careful not to present collaborative praxis as a solution to the problems of institutionality or to the "disciplinary crisis" faced by women's studies[85] (J. Desai et al, 2010, p.50-1). Collaborative praxis is described as "messy and

fraught," "always shifting and paradoxical," and certainly *not* a "panacea for Northern–based feminist academics" (CTFP Contributors, 2010, p.211). While this collaborative approach clearly tries to challenge scholarship-as-usual, the contributors are aware and concerned that their efforts were facilitated by two contemporary institutional trends. First, transnational collaboration fits with universities' efforts to globalize/internationalize and, second, universities are seeking to integrate those outside the university and outside of North America through "partnerships" (Desai et al, 2010, p.52). Reflection upon troubling institutional facilitations and constraints are woven through the text.

The contributors to *CTFP* are not interested in suggesting critical transnational feminist praxis or collaboration as a definitive "model." Rather their work reads, collectively, to imply that flexibility and on-going negotiation are important principles that can inform more equitable collaborative projects. Their suggestion is not "a simple reversal of hierarchies and systems of valorization" but that collaborative praxis be undertaken as a fluid approach that "can acquire its meaning and form in a given place, time, and struggle" (2010, p.9). Contributors note that collaboration must evolve to meet participants' needs, "differ from project to project," and that in "the terms of collaboration must be rethought as circumstances change" (CTFP Contributors, 2010, p.211). Collaborative research projects should look quite different from each other, and the variety of contributions to the volume demonstrates this.

A major accomplishment of this book is that it portrays some of the actual day-to-day practices of transnational feminist work that are glaringly absent in much theoretical work on transnational feminist activisms, such as: a) navigations of language barriers, translation, and cultural differences (Nagar, 2010; Barndt, 2010); b) emotional labor (Bullington & Swarr, 2010); c) the importance of quantitative data literacy for Southern activist partners (Peake & de Souza,

2010); d) resisting NGOization (Peake & de Souza, 2010; Sangtin Writers, 2010); and e) activist partners bearing the brunt of violent reprisal.

Though the editors are careful not to promote a particular model of collaboration or transnational praxis as a solution, I would argue that the text does perform some field-building functions. In other words, arguments and approaches are presented with the hope of effecting change in the knowledge practices of other feminist scholars. *CTFP* socially and conceptually organizes by describing, analyzing, and critiquing an exemplary – though fraught – process of collaborative praxis. It suggests theoretical, epistemological, and methodological principles that can organize the intellectual work of feminist academics. In self-reflexively exposing their own embeddedness in structures of power (institutional, racialized, classed, etc.), this volume functions through a moral imperative that seeks to interpellate the critical scholar/student who wants to be in solidarity with differently situated women, to transcend the limits of their positionality, and to resist the ruling relations of the neoliberal academy, by engaging in subversive knowledge practices with activist partners. Self-reflexivity is developed in critical dialogue with partners.

The critical transnational feminist collaborative (research) praxis approach to TFA departs significantly from primarily analyzing the practices of movements and activists – taking activist practices as an object of study – while engaging TFA knowledges and texts as a less important kind of data as seen in the second orientation above. Collaborative praxis involves interacting with movement actors as partners in research design, implementation, and writing. Another departure from the "as data" approach discussed above is that Southern partners' intellectual contributions, labor, and agency are overtly acknowledged.

4.3.1 Academic knowledge practices used in collaborative transnational feminist projects. In my analysis of the second orientation to TFAK above ("as data"), I focus on how citational practices and reference lists reveal implicit orientations to TFAK. In *CTFP*, the reference lists include a preponderance of Northern academic sources, but include a number of activist, NGO, and Southern academic publications as well. The binaries that the project seeks to challenge include "individually/collaboratively produced knowledges, academia/activism, and theory/method" (Nagar & Swarr, 2010, p. 5). Furthermore, the project seeks to ground understandings of TF in "communities *everywhere [italics in original]*" (p. 5). Yet, the opening three essays *do not reference any movement texts*, other than the Combahee River Collective statement which is reprinted in an academic feminist text listed in the works cited (Nagar & Swarr, 2010, p. 19). Furthermore, the introduction and the two theoretical essays which frame the book are all written collaboratively by academics without activist partners as co-authors (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010; Desai et al, 2010; Nagar & Swarr, 2010). The remaining chapters are co-written by activist-academic partners. So the book is theoretically framed by academics and the academic-activist partners' essays are case studies.

As this volume explicitly explores transnational feminist collaborative (research) praxis, I will shift my focus away from reference lists and citational practices, towards other relevant knowledge practices in my discussion of this third orientation to TFAK. Critical transnational feminist praxis is different from the "as data" approach discussed above in that scholars consciously embrace and name this approach. This approach takes some important steps towards developing a more equitable and ethical orientation to TFAK for transnational feminist studies. Specifically noteworthy are the following three knowledge practices: a) offsetting institutional

limitations in an attempt to partner equitably with Southern activists for the purposes of collaborative knowledge production across academic/activist and North/South divides; b) the implicit or explicit acknowledgement of activists' experiential knowledges, expertise, agency, learning needs, and their intellectual work (labor and output); and c) the use of collaborative dialogic reflection on collaborative praxis. Collectively these practices actualize an intention to treat activists as partners (equitable engagement in an institutional and geo-political context of inequalities) whose knowledge and learning matter (not as research subjects or informants), thereby destabilizing knowledge hierarchies. This demonstrates that Northern scholars are likely to learn *from* not just *about* their Southern partners, and that scholars also learn experientially about themselves and the limitations of Northern scholarly positionality and knowledge production. Scholars' own learning will be addressed as an impact of this approach, and discussed below in terms of the tension between recentering and decentering academic knowledges.

First collaborative knowledge practice: Strategizing to offset inequities in power. The first practice is actually a set of practices undertaken to consciously name and strategize around institutional and interpersonal power imbalances that impact the partnership and research process. Within the collaborative TF praxis approach there is a concerted effort to enact prefigurative equitable relations across privilege and difference, informed by critical reflection about the possibilities and limitations imposed by institutional (academic and funding) contexts. Authors seriously grapple with the challenges of cross-border partnerships in the light of numerous asymmetries of power, including intractable colonial power imbalances. None of the contributors are naive enough to believe these power differences can be transcended; instead

they are named and strategized around. The strategies include offsetting institutionally imposed inequities as well as intentionally exploiting them.

Northern scholars' access to better funding and more time to write are factored into the division of labor. Some of the Northern-based scholars try to redistribute institutional resources in ways that facilitate the agendas of their research partners. Decision-making is shared, activist partners' priorities are privileged when possible, and multi-vocal co-edited texts are produced. The researchers may want to intervene in hierarchical academic funding requirements, and knowledge production practices; however, they acknowledge that institutional constraints and tenure requirements often pose hurdles to aspirations of decolonizing transnational collaboration. Peake and de Souza note:

> feminist academic activism can easily turn into feminist academic colonization. For example one research project was funded by an international organization that… stipulated that the research contract had to label Linda as the "consultant," the so–called expert in charge of the project who was "authorized" to "employ" Red Thread members. There were also further stipulations that a certain (large) percentage of the research monies had to be spent on the consultant's fee. It was impossible to label the northern-based consultant and the southern-based counterpart as equal partners… The research contract necessitated a hierarchization of the research team in which the North/South and academic/activist divides were further solidified. (2010, p.110–1)

In this case the "consultant" donated her fees to the group to counter the imposition of hierarchical relations through funding criteria, indicating the weighted role the individual Northern-based researcher's ethical choices can have on collaborative knowledge production dynamics.

While good intentions are sometimes effectively actualized in strategic efforts to offset power imbalances, collaborative research projects have material effects that cannot always be controlled or predicted. For example, the ways in which benefits accrue unevenly to certain women exacerbate existing class divisions between Guyanese women in this project:

> [w]hile Red Thread started off by organizing with grassroots women, there is an ever present danger that without consciousness and questioning of its politics, it will end up creating an elite group of the grassroots instead of promoting an engagement with working with women like themselves to promote change for everyone's benefit. The implication for transnational feminist praxis is that we need to think more deeply about how the research process itself is reproducing hierarchies. (Peak and de Souza, 2010, p.113)

These hierarchies extend to contexts outside of the research relationship as we can see in this example.

Feminists are familiar with critiques of power relations in the research process, particularly when Northern scholars conduct research across racial, class, and national lines. Hui Niu Wilcox comments:

> the dominant model (white academics + disadvantaged communities of colour in the South), if not explicitly addressed, reinforces the existing hierarchical binary that equates subjectivity/center with whiteness/Westernness/Northernness and other/margin with otherwise. I was especially struck by Karen de Souza's comment about how academic projects such as this often fail to facilitate connections between activist communities. It's a poignant and important realization… What is really at stake? Producing a network of scholars and scholarly knowledge or producing a network of activists? Theoretically,

> these two should not be posited against each other, but in reality, with all of us burning out in our institutions, we all know too well what the priority is. (quoted in CTFP Contributors, 2010, p. 215)

The presumption of activist dependence upon academic mediators here is a jarring example of how critical self-reflection can recenter academic agencies, overwriting activists' own agency as well as pre-existing networks. This is an example of how activist work is overlooked. As we saw in earlier chapters, activists have forged many networks without academic facilitators for many decades. (This will be discussed below).

It is not only academic institutional barriers that are critiqued. NGOization is flagged as a process which creates obstacles for activism and for equitable work relations (Peake & de Souza, 2010, p. 110; Sangtin Writers, 2010).

However imperfect, these efforts at achieving a more equitable distribution of power within research teams are not without benefit to activist partners. Sometimes the differences between academic and activist positionalities is consciously maintained and used strategically to bolster credibility (Pratt, 2010, p.71). What activists gained through the experiences often had to do with leveraging the respect that academic researchers are awarded as well as learning necessary skills.

In explicitly defining the volume as a collaborative endeavor undertaken in contexts of inequality, academics undertake specific actions. Activist partners are seen and treated as interlocutors or co-producers of knowledge and texts, rather than as research subjects or informants. The contributors write, think, and labor together, albeit in relationships that bear the marks of the inequalities of their respective contexts. Therefore a different way to struggle with forces of social and conceptual organization is described. This means that activists' intellectual

contributions and labor is acknowledged, which is linked to another set of knowledge practices, considered next.

Second collaborative knowledge practice: Acknowledging activist intellectual work (labor and knowledges). The second knowledge practice noted in *CTFP* is that both Northern-based researchers and Southern activist partners acknowledge the activist partners' intellectual labor, their expertise, experiential knowledge, and their desire to learn certain research skills. Peake and De Souza (2010) discuss how a Northern feminist preference for qualitative research was poorly aligned with activists' desire to learn quantitative research skills useful in producing solid data that can then be used in making demands. Geraldine Pratt and the Philippine Women's Centre of BC and Ugnayan Ng Kabayaang Pilipiono Sa Canada/The Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance report how diasporic Filipino youth in Canada developed confidence and skills in learning how to talk about their experiences in ways which allowed them to mobilize politically. Charlene, a Filipino community activist in Vancouver states:

> we have to be open to collaborating and working with professors who are also very progressive…because we're also not living in a society that takes our community and our research seriously. Second, we want to change our society but we also have to know how to live in it, survive in it. So we have to be able to, you know, become a little more sophisticated, especially if we have to talk about our community, really know how to articulate our experiences…we have to wear a lot of hats when we are doing our political activism. So we have to be very comprehensive in our skills. (Quoted in Pratt et al, 2010, p. 74-5)

In *CTFP*, the reader encounters realistic representations of activists as knowers and learners in struggle, rather than romanticized images of an all knowing subaltern. For example, in discussing the partnership with the Guyanese women's group Red Thread, Peake and de Souza write:

> [a]s beneficiaries of research, women in Red Thread are not only paid research workers but are also redefining their subjectivities and seeing themselves as knowing subjects –- asking questions, setting agendas, and becoming increasingly unwilling to accept that their everyday lives are irrelevant to knowledge production. (2010, p. 113)

Formal and informal learning, while not so named, are nonetheless implicitly acknowledged as relevant to activist work. This particular team met with Guyanese university students as part of the project. The writers note that a working class member of Red Thread with a primary school education gained the confidence to express herself and challenge others by using "her own life experiences" (p.113). The intellectual competence and labor of activists is acknowledged and remunerated, and activists' experiential knowledge is emphasized in this second set of knowledge practices. Activists' expertise, knowledge, learning, and labor are implicitly and explicitly acknowledged in this approach. Scholars' own learning will be discussed below as an outcome or impact TFS, though it is an intertwined aspect of relevant knowledge practices. Given my concern in this dissertation with the importance of acknowledging activists' informal learning and experiential and tacit knowledges, as well as activists' participation in movement-sited knowledge production, this is a particularly important accomplishment of this volume.

Third collaborative knowledge practice: Producing collaborative textual output. The third knowledge practice – collaborative knowledge production – is consciously employed as a challenge to the dominance of peer-reviewed single-authored texts as a normative academic knowledge product (Nagar & Swarr, 2010, p. 2). *CTFP* reflects the collaborative process through

multi-vocality in its textual style. The pieces in this volume are co-authored; in all cases a Northern-based academic is one of the writers and often wrote the original draft from which the co-authors worked. The use of italics, first names, or the pronouns "I" or "we" to indicate sections of text written in a particular voice reminds the reader of the intended multi-vocality of the texts, highlighting where particular tensions or insights arise.[86] This approach is informed by an awareness of the limitations of Northern scholarly knowledge production and perspective. While this is not new, the collaborative, critical dialogic approach to reflection does mean that academics' own informal learning through collaboration is traceable through the text and arrived at with a degree of accountability to partners. In chapter 7 we will see the importance of accountability to activists as an important force shaping activist knowledge production. As the un/learnings of Northern-based academics seem to have emerged as a result of dialogic critical reflection on the collaborative projects, individual scholars' learning is discussed below as part of my analysis of the impact of transnational collaborative research and knowledge practices on TFS.

4.3.2 Analysis of the impact of collaborative knowledge practices upon the decolonizing agenda for transnational feminist studies (TFS): Decentering and recentering academic knowledges. This third orientation to TFAK is more conscious of the politics of engaging activist intellectual work, in both senses. It seeks to decenter academic knowledges by bringing them into dialogue with activist knowledges. While not explicitly employing a SML framework*, CTFP* recounts examples of experiential learning and unlearning through transnational feminist collaboration. The contributors – scholars and activists alike – engage critically, and for the most part, unromantically, with their own informal learning. This is a source of knowledge that has been so pointedly missing from other TFS works. Inclusion of

reflections on scholars' learning and the limits of northern perspectives implies some success at the decolonizing agenda of *CTFP*, and the contributors' stated goal of dislodging the North American university from the "pinnacle of knowledge production" (CTFP contributors, 2010, p. 217).

Whether the dismantling of the hierarchization of knowledges and related binaries has transpired is questionable. A single volume actually accomplishing such a radical shift is an unrealistic expectation. These hierarchies can (and must) be chipped away at from multiple sites and through multiple methods. Simultaneously, the strong recuperative logic of academic knowledges must be acknowledged, as the contributors do when they recognize the institutional conditions that make their work possible. The editors sought to make the case for collaborative (research) praxis as a valid form of decentering and decolonizing knowledge production that, paradoxically, owes what little recognition it receives to neoliberal imperatives that seek to create the North American university as internationalized. However, there are also signs of a not-so-subtle recentering of Northern positionalities at play in *CTFP*. Providing a model of deeper engagement with activist knowledges, implies a decentering, to a degree, academic knowledges.

Decentering is a term used for the naming, critique, and displacement of dominant forms of knowledge. Recentering refers to ways in which dominant subjectivities and modes of knowing resist this challenge by asserting their primacy. The tension between the decentering and recentering of dominant modes of knowing and knowledge production will be discussed below as impacts of the knowledge practices employed in *CTFP*. These practices were chosen as result of the stated and implied orientations to TFAK in this volume. In this way we can see that un/conscious orientations towards TFAK have impacts upon subjectivities and knowledge practices and products. They influence how the field or framework of transnational feminisms

develops. One of the points that I hope my thesis makes clear is how conventional and subversive knowledge practices are implicated in the recentering of academic TF knowledges, even within efforts to center activisms and movement knowledges.

Decentering academic knowledges and postionalities. The decentering of academic knowledge production in *CTFP* is connected to the contributors' goal of "decolonizing TF" (Swarr & Nagar, 2010, p. 21). Yet, the editors are aware that neither of these tasks can be easily accomplished. They recognize how the "inevitable process of knowledge hierarchization serves to reinforce the three dichotomies named at the outset – between academics and activists; between theory and method; and between individual and collaborative processes of knowledge making" (Swarr & Nagar, 2010, p. 8). Given these tensions, what emerges in this volume is an earnest look at the possibilities and pitfalls of collaborative (research) praxis as a decolonizing strategy in a wider institutional and structural context of inequalities. I would argue that what is achieved in many of the essays is however a more modest and attainable outcome: *the decentering of individual academic researchers.*

In this volume, Northern-based academics are critically interrogating the constraining aspects of institutional knowledge production. Unfortunately, Northern-based scholars remain hampered by their positionalities in ways that are less clearly linked to the institutional practices that shape research. For example, in *CTFP*, Peake and de Souza comment on the "tension between Northern privilege and academic feminists' reflexive discussions of power in the research process and their (ironic, often unintentional) estrangement from the political struggles of survival" faced by some of their Southern partners (2010, p.106). What does solidarity or collaboration mean when daily struggles are overlooked?

It is critical to recognize how Northern privilege *and scholarly training* can blind academic feminists to important aspects of their activist partners' realities. Many Northern-based feminists are upfront about their positionality, acknowledging that there are inherent blind spots to any social location. Many scholars and students actively seek to "unlearn" dominant ways of seeing and knowing as part of a decolonizing praxis. Collaborative research that seeks more equitable power relations between parties consciously addresses the limitations of Northern scholarly knowledge production and perspectives. Why, then, do we see again and again, the insurmountability of this hurdle? I want to suggest that such problems are built into the familiar and subversive knowledge practices that Northern feminist scholars rely upon. In other words, perhaps unconsciously, scholars are replicating these gaps between TFS and TFA through familiar knowledge practices. These knowledge practices have functions that socially and conceptually organize both orientations toward activists, their knowledges, and to scholarship and research.

When Northern researchers' academic knowledge and understanding of power and oppression fall short, North American-centrism is exposed. One might fairly ask: is it *despite* their nuanced analyses of race, class, gender, and nationality or *because* of those same theoretical investments that Northern-based scholars struggle to know in a different way? In a particularly insightful passage, Geraldine Pratt demonstrates how the experience of collaboration taught her about the limitations of her own North American critical antiracist feminist perspective:

> I have used my own experience as an opportunity to reflect upon the difficulties that feminist scholars from the global North might have envisioning and participating in transnational feminist praxis because of hegemonic ways of seeing the world and academic knowledge production. I brought to our collaborations a body of feminist

> theory about racial difference in a multicultural society that blinded me to the ways that transnationalism extends and reshapes this theorization. (2010, p.84)

Here Pratt refers to learning to see the *transnational* dimension of the experiences and political strategies of Filipino migrants in Canada. She explains how interpreting migrant issues through familiar feminist academic intersectional lenses of race, gender, class and (presumably critiques of) Canadian multiculturalism erased these transnational dimensions (p.77). Expanding upon what that means for transnational feminist scholars, she lists examples of how academic transnational feminists succumb to "seeing like the state" (the phrase is James C. Scott's). She explains that this happens "by absorbing and reproducing Russian-doll models of care and responsibility, over-generalizing the reach of knowledge developed in the global North, erasing the global South, or conceiving places outside the Global North through tropes of poverty and underdevelopment" (2010, p. 84). Perhaps then, despite sincere efforts, North American feminist scholarship has not yet fully reckoned with the decolonizing challenge of early postcolonial feminist critiques (Mohanty, 1984; Spivak, 1988)**.**

If Pratt provides us with an exemplary model of critical reflection and unlearning that can unfold as the Northern scholar is decentered, such efforts to use learning through collaboration to offset the blind spots of her Northern-based positionality alarm other contributors. Desai et al. (2010) caution that such approaches replicate colonial power dynamics around knowledge production: Southern women provide the raw material for Northern feminist knowledge generation and edification. So the individual scholars' decentering is a result of, and thus only a very partial response to, the challenge of unsettling the colonial relations of knowledge production.

The critical North American-based TF scholar is clearly decentered at a personal level through the transnational feminist collaborative research praxis process, as attested to by the various un/learnings that are recounted throughout the *CTFP* volume. The writers expose how through TF projects they learned about their blind spots, motivations, intentions, strategies for subversion, suspicions, and ultimately their entrapment in institutional and geo-political power relations. It is imperative to recognize how crucial the scholars' own learning and unlearning are to the decentering of North American academic knowledge that the collection is able to achieve (even if in limited ways). While such individual change is positive and to be encouraged, it remains the case that North American academic knowledge production continues to occupy a privileged position within the volume. The individual scholar is decentered, North American academic knowledges, not so. The understanding of praxis as research-centered is a case in point.

Recentering academic knowledges and postionalities. *CTFP* aims to decenter conventional academic knowledge production and North American academic positionalities, yet this lofty goal is not achieved, despite effectively decentering some individual scholars. This is because the collaborative praxis model itself relies upon a recentering of academic feminist positionalities in two ways. The first is fairly straight forward: CTFP is *transnational* because Northern-based scholars are involved with Southern partners. It is important to highlight that the activist partners are not necessarily engaged in transnational activism, which is often local, national, or South-South in practice, but rather TF collaborative *research* projects with Northern based scholars.[87] Scholarly positionality anchors the transnationality of the (research) collaboration.

The second way in which North American academic positionalities are centered is more complicated. The collaborative praxis in question is centered on academic research and knowledge production and therefore the term TF collaborative *praxis* is used in ways which overwrite TF activist praxis, obscuring the uniqueness of activist epistemologies. The recentering of North American academic positionalities and agency are visible in the understanding of praxis advanced in this volume.

The collaborative (research) praxis model *itself* relies upon a recentering of: a) Northern academic feminist agency and; b) academic knowledge production and research practices. First, we can see that TF collaborative praxis is interpreted in this volume as something that academics initiate and are centrally involved in. Initially, this seems like a way to disrupt a common binary which posits academic theorizing against activist praxis (or method). Yet, in presenting a model of *praxis* that so highlights the accountability, agency, and research agenda of Northern-based academic feminists, alternative sites and alternative forms of TF knowledge and alliances are obfuscated or placed in roles that facilitate academically instigated research partnerships. Despite the aim to dissolve boundaries such as academic/activist and theory/praxis, what emerges is a counter-intuitive displacement of transnational feminist activists' own knowledges, political practices, and vernacular vocabularies from the centrality of TF praxis. This decentering of activist knowledges becomes more visible by identifying institutional accounts and (activist) members' accounts of collaborative research praxis, and remembering the non-collaborative North-South research related elements of on-the-ground TF praxis.

The use of the term "transnational feminist praxis" to refer to academic research partnerships across North-South divides also erases or at least marginalizes the many forms of transnational feminist praxis that transpire in movement and activist contexts *without the*

involvement of Northern academics or groups. Informal and pre-existing South-South networks are rendered all but invisible. Wilcox's quotation above laments that activists were not connected with one another through the collaborative research projects. Even though that comment is based upon an activist's complaint, it is troubling. It implies that activists cannot or do not make these connections themselves. It must be acknowledged that TFA have a long history of engagement in (critical) transnational feminist praxis, with or without Western-university based partners. There are many transnational networks in which North American academic institutions do not play a definitive , or any, role. This volume, however, primarily hinges upon the model of academics and activists as partners and interlocutors, not on activist-activist transnational linkages. In this way, academic positionalities are recentered.

The second aspect of the recentering of Northern academic feminist positionalities is notable in the emphasis on *academic* approaches to knowledge. Documentation of subversive and creative knowledge practices is a strength of *CTFP*. Methods of knowledge production that are not research-centered do have a presence in *CTFP*. Most notable are Sangtin's formulation of three fields of labor: crops, NGOs, and academic disciplines in which peasants, paid NGO staff and academics toil (p.126). The most effective decentering of academic knowledges accomplished in this volume is found in essays about embodied forms of knowing, particularly pieces on dance and community arts, which escape or exceed documentary practices (Barndt, 2010; Tinsley et al, 2010).

Yet, the assumed centrality of *academic knowledge practices* to a definition of transnational feminist praxis is not effectively interrogated/decentered. Even J. Desai et al., who provided a very nuanced critique of how transnational feminist collaborative praxis is made possible in part because it fits with the university's efforts to globalize knowledge production,

still presume that academic knowledge and discourses are central and necessarily relevant in movement contexts. They say: "[look] carefully at the disciplinary languages that make our work possible and that on some level we must rely on, whether or not we are located "inside" or "outside" the university" (2010, p. 47). While academics may well carry our disciplinary languages with us outside of university contexts, the presumption of its relevance outside the university is jarring. It is true that many professionalized and NGOized transnational advocates speak in a hybrid English vernacular of academic, bureaucratic, advocacy, and local discourses. This should however alert scholars to ways in which hegemonic forms of speech drawn from academia can permeate NGO environments, overwriting local activists' own terms.

As an interesting contrast, Barndt presents a thoughtful discussion of translation, including "'untranslatable terms'" (2010, p. 183). She discusses a project in which the translators created a sort of working genealogy of origins rather than a glossary of terms with definitive meanings. This strategy is used to avoid imposition of convenient but dominant feminist languages within transnational collaboration. Attention to different languages of resistance is an important tool to dislodge dominant ways of knowing, but it is not a consistent emphasis in this volume. On-the-ground, struggles over the coloniality of counter-hegemonic language is more pervasively woven into TFA organizing.

In sum, from my textual analysis of knowledge practices stated or implied in *CTFP*, we can see that transnational feminist collaborative (research) praxis is significantly different from the engagement of TFAK as data, discussed above as the second orientation to TFAK. Some of these advantages have to do with working with living people as opposed to archival texts. *CTFP* presents a compelling approach to transnational collaborative research. This is an attempt to engage activist partners as co-producers of knowledge, whose learning, experiential, and

professional knowledges matter. Innovative knowledge practices emerge from this different orientation to TFAK. These strengths are offset, however, by certain institutionally mandated knowledge and funding practices, which undermine the decolonizing agenda of this project. The way in which North-American positionalities impact the understanding of what makes collaboration and praxis transnational undercuts the more radical agenda of decentering of academic feminist knowledges. In contrasting the "as data" and collaborative praxis approaches, I hope to have shown the reader an important difference in orientations towards activist knowledges and how such orientations are embedded in both conventional and subversive knowledge practices. My argument about how "TF" have been socially and conceptually organized requires that knowledge practices and their effects be traced in this way.

Perhaps more effective in a decentering, decolonizing approach is to emphasize that what TFA are doing is legitimate research and theory, grounded in their own contexts of struggle.[88] Transnational feminist activists can be understood as more than partners to academic researchers; they are knowledge producers in their own right, struggling on their own terrain. This has not escaped the contributors to *CTFP*. Alexander and Mohanty (2010) point to extra-university sites of knowledge production as legitimate in and of themselves:

> one of the major points of our analysis is to understand the relationship between a politics of location and accountability and the politics of knowledge production by examining the Academy as *one* site in which transnational feminist knowledge is produced, while examining those knowledges that derived from political mobilizations that push up, in, and against the academy ultimately for grounding the existence of multiple genealogies of radical transnational feminist practice. [emphasis added] (2010, p. 26)

If decentering is to be more effectively accomplished, it behooves scholars to recognize other sites and modes of knowledge production, on their own terms, and not as presumably subordinated to North American academic knowledges. This isn't a reversal of hierarchies, but rather a democratizing, decolonizing move. In the next section we see an approach to TFAK in which their autonomy is better recognized.

4.4 Fourth Orientation: TFA*K* are an Object of Analysis in Their Own Right

The fourth scholarly approach to TFAK and texts, though more rarely encountered, is most promising in terms of its deeper engagement with movement knowledges on their own terms. In this section, it is important that the distinction between my usage of the phrases "TFAK are used as *data"* and "TFAK are used as *an object of analysis"* is clear. This fourth approach is marked by the scholar's engagement of the (*learning* and) *knowledge production* of TFA *as an object of analysis in its own right.* This is distinct from the "as data" or second approach described above wherein TFA groups or networks themselves are studied, but their practices and ideas are disassembled into bits of information to inform and build the theoretical arguments of scholars. In such research the named "objects of analysis" would normally be TFA NGOs, networks, women's groups, forums, events, campaigns, social movements, or activism/s. However, my categorization of four main approaches to TFA knowledges is based upon an analysis of *how scholars relate to the knowledges produced*, not the stance that scholars take to activisms *per se*. In other words, my categorization is not based solely upon the author's stated object of study. When I say that TFAK are approached as "objects of analysis," I mean that *activist knowledges themselves* are the research foci, that they are not fully subjugated to the scholar's argument.

There are inherent limits to decolonizing approaches that rely so heavily upon texts, given the way that texts have overwritten oral traditions (Smith 2001). Nonetheless when TFA *knowledges are* the object of study, the *texts* produced by activists are closely read, analyzed, and cited. Ideally, in multilingual contexts of transnational activisms, this would also include texts not written in English. The complexity, content, and context of activists' intellectual work becomes visible in this approach. Within the analysis that I am advancing, the difference between using activist knowledges as data and as an object of analysis hinges upon *the stance which the scholar takes towards activist knowledges and their epistemological specificities*, as well as the knowledge practices employed by academic researchers.

This fourth approach does not transcend the implicit academic–activist binary that assumes academics do theory and activists engage in practices, but it does contest it. As we saw above, this binary is operative in the "as data" approach. It is challenged in the "collaborative research praxis" approach. The fourth orientation also contests this binary as *the theoretical elements and dimensions of activist work are made visible*. In other words, this approach begins with the conviction that activists produce knowledges as valuable as those produced by academics. This is an important orientation to TFAK and texts. This perspective therefore approaches activists' texts (and practices) as theoretical, intentional, and practical interventions into social problems. The two texts examined below – one by Janet Conway and one by Brooke Ackerly – succeed in engaging activist texts without disassembling them to support a scholarly line of argument that overwrites similar analyses by activists. Both texts allow activist intellectual work to push back at academic knowledges to a degree.

In this fourth orientation towards TFAK as an object of analysis, scholars still theorize, analyze, and critique. They do so, however, with recognition of both the strengths *and*

weaknesses of the compelling intellectual work done in movement contexts.[89] This fourth approach of engaging directly with movement-generated knowledges and activist writing is heartening for it recognizes and takes seriously the ideas produced in non-academic sites, yet does not fall in the trap of romanticizing movement knowledges. The approaches of the authors discussed below implies that activist texts are more than data and that the ideas generated in activist contexts can *challenge and guide* Northern academic knowledges. Within this fourth orientation, I will discuss two ways in which activist knowledges are engaged. The first is in movement-based genealogies and the second involves theorizing *from* (not *about*) activist knowledges.

4.4.1 Movement-based genealogies. Since the publication of *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (Alexander & Mohanty, 1997), genealogical approaches have been popular in transnational feminist scholarship. Recently, Alexander and Mohanty issued a call for alternative and comparative genealogies of "the transnational" and of transnational feminisms as they operate in social movement contexts (2010, p. 26). They directed scholars to look to non-academic sites of knowledge production in an attempt to search for alternative epistemologies. This is a long overdue call, given the past four decades of dense transnational feminist networking. The tension between the practices of citing/siting academic and activists' knowledges is addressed through Alexander and Mohanty's focus on the relationship between the "spatiality of power" (p.27), the politics of location, knowledge production, and accountability: in other words, they are after a socially-, politically- and institutionally-situated comparative discussion of praxis in a variety of contexts. The call for *movement-based* genealogies is an important development for TFS because it can nudge scholars into a recognition of the unique epistemologies of TFA milieu, and unsettle North American-

centric understandings of transnational feminisms. (Fernandez (2013) comes at this problem from a different angle.)

Alexander and Mohanty want to "locate academic knowledge production in relation to other knowledge productions" (2010, p. 57). This is a decentering move. However Desai, Bouchard, & Detournay (2010) push further in their contribution to the same anthology *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. Worried that this inquiry into activist knowledges can lead to simply inverting the binary of academic and activist knowledges, they call for an interrogation of power relations around knowledge production. They explain:

> the invocation of praxis as codeword for an 'activist knowledge' that itself goes unquestioned may set up a kind of hierarchy of scholarship within feminist and LGBT studies: theory is posed as institutional and problematic, praxis as the extra institutional answer to our conundrum. (2010, p. 55)

Desai et al. are wary that praxis or collaboration will be posed as solutions for dilemmas faced by feminist academics: "[i]n this sense, the call to activism that is implicit within the celebration of praxis might also perform a particular disciplining of women's studies" (p. 56). Yet, if one understands activist work as theoretical this is less of a conundrum.

Desai et al. suggest that a critique of the university "does not need to use an insider-outsider binary but can be based in an alternative paradigm that acknowledges and names the specific modes of production of both academic and nonacademic knowledges" (2010, p. 57). My project moves in this direction. In addressing the conditions of possibility of transnational feminisms, Desai et al. highlight "a variety of institutional formations, concepts, and theoretical trends" (2010, p.50). They trace "the work done by the 'transnational' in relation to the other concepts with which it often appears: collaboration, theory, praxis, and university" (2010, p. 48)

(Activism, while not named, is addressed in their discussion of praxis). They are concerned that the "contested field of inquiry" of transnational feminisms has "congealed" around these four concepts (2010, p. 46). So, we can see that there is an emerging call for movement-based genealogies as well as for more nuanced empirical analyses of different sites and modes of TFA knowledge production. Having arrived at a similar conclusion, via a different route, I am encouraged by these lines of scholarly inquiry that, in a sense, acknowledge the gap I named at the outset between TFS and TFA.

Scholars seeking to produce alternative genealogies of TF that are movement-based would almost certainly require engaging activist and movement knowledges in a contextualized manner. Alternative genealogies of transnational feminisms could chart the development of concepts, theories, and strategies through practices and texts by activists, advocates, NGOs and social movements. This would at the very least demonstrate the breadth and depth of movement knowledges. It would also make visible some different itineraries of "the transnational" and "transnational feminisms." For readers who share the concern voiced by Desai et al. (2010) regarding a simplistic inversion of academic-activist knowledge hierarchies, I want to stress that nothing in this more movement-engaged approach precludes critique. Critique would, however, also consider the epistemological specificities of particular movement knowledge contexts.

Janet Conway has done extensive research on transnational feminisms at the World Social Forum (WSF). Her contribution to *Solidarities beyond Borders*, one of the three anthologies analyzed in this chapter, uses the genealogical frame. In a subsequent article, she explores transnational feminist knowledges explicitly in an "alternative genealogy of the global justice movement" that seeks "to identify the distinct character and substance of feminist knowledge that is being produced and brought to bear on the anti-globalization terrain through

sustained feminist engagement with the World Social Forum (WSF)" (2011, p. 33). Conway focuses on "self-identified transnational feminist networks which have a sustained presence and multifaceted engagement in the WSF as sites for the production of feminist knowledges in the anti-globalization milieu" (p.34). She offers detailed backgrounds of the networks that she discusses. Focusing on these key TFA networks *and their knowledges*, Conway analyses the shifts that she detects in TFA away from UN-engagement and towards movement building and multi-movement dialogues (p. 35).

Might it not be fair to say that Conway's approach uses activist practices and discourses as data in research on TF networks which advance her own analysis? At first glance, yes, her approach might be seen as concordant with the "as data" approach considered above. Yet there are a number of factors that make it clear that something more complex and nuanced is happening in Conway's work. These include: a) the degree and quality of her engagement with feminist movement knowledges, b) her contextualization of their processes of emergence, and c) her acknowledgement of their uniqueness. I argue that her engagement of TFA knowledges as legitimate, contending forms of feminist knowledge marks Conway's approach as different from the "as data" approach discussed above. The distinction that I am suggesting between the "as data" and "as knowledges" approach is not defined by the author's stated choice of object of analysis alone, but rather by how scholars orient to movement knowledges in their research and writing practices. Importantly, Conway highlights but does not romanticize movement knowledges.

Conway advances an argument about the strong impact of feminist knowledges on the WSF by referencing activist texts, or the "writings produced by activists in the different networks" (2011, p. 48). She relies on activists' own articulation of their views about anti-

globalization, finding them rich and compelling. Conway is able to expose how feminist knowledges have shaped the development of the WSF:

> [with] over 30 years of intense contact, conflict and negotiation across differences of nation, culture, language, religion, race and class, transnational feminists produce new ways of doing and theorizing emancipatory politics on the global scale, which have been imported into the WSF. (p. 55)

Conway sees the powerful influence of feminist knowledges in the WSF, even though sexism has dictated that women, who account for more than half the attendees, are marginalized in leadership and that feminism is marginalized as a discourse (p. 34).

In response to the fear of simplistic inversions of knowledge hierarchies, posed by Jigna Desai et al (2010), one need only look at the breadth of Conway's sources. Conway's focuses on activist texts but does not eschew academic research (as her reference list and citations indicate): "[t]his is not to claim that feminism is all knowing, that the feminist discourses at the WSF or more generally are adequate in and of themselves, nor to claim that feminist knowledges are superior to those of other movements" (p. 58). In fact, for Conway, the strength of the feminist knowledges at the WSF lies in their ability to recognize their own partiality.

Conway examines two strands of distinct yet overlapping feminist knowledges at the WSF. Aspects of the knowledges that she highlights include that they are "rooted in practice, they embrace pluralism, they are non-hegemonic and they work through and across difference" (p. 59). It is this ability to engage with and highlight feminist activist knowledge practices in non-academic contexts without either romanticizing them or subsuming them to academic discourse that makes Conway's work stand out. This leads me to differentiate a clear implicit or explicit focus on activist knowledges from the approach in which a network is an object of

analysis and activists' texts are used as data. Similar academic knowledge practices are at play, but the orientation to movement knowledges is significantly different.

Conway maps the feminist knowledges at the WSF. She differentiates between types of feminist knowledges, acknowledging *both* the academic, abstract knowledges of the NGO/TAN world and the "largely descriptive discourses" such as those advanced by the World March of Women (p.44). Interestingly Conway only uses the term "activist knowledges" in the title of her essay, and she does not use the term "movement knowledges" at all. Her discussion of *feminist* knowledges produced in engagement with WSF center activist knowledges yet does not exclude academic knowledges. More promising still is that Conway's framing of feminist knowledges leaves open space for the mutual influence of academic, non-academic, and other knowledges that inform the knowledges that feminist activists mobilize in these spaces. In accomplishing this she echoes what some SML scholars point to: the importance of recognizing the interplay of different knowledges in movement contexts (Flowers & Swan, 2011). Her use of "feminist knowledges" may be an attempt to transcend the binary of academic and activist knowledges by seeing them as deeply interwoven. As Conway says, "feminist thought is produced in relation to a complex world-wide movement, is constitutive of its praxis, and needs to be understood in that context" (p.34). Her approach to feminist knowledges may also be a sign of Conway's fluency in both worlds. What warrants emphasis, for the purpose of justifying the choice of this alternative genealogy as an example of scholarship that more deeply engages TFA knowledges, is that Conway's analysis of feminist discourses at the WSF is skillfully executed without subsuming activist knowledges to academic discourses. She allows the reader to hear what feminist activists are saying and to see that there are different practices and sites of epistemological labor and struggle where ideas as compelling as academic scholarship are produced.

4.4.2 Theorizing *in* and *from* activist texts and practices. Brooke Ackerly (2004) demonstrates a similarly deep and respectful engagement with activist knowledges. She argues that women's human rights activists have developed a cross-cultural theory of human rights through their practices, one which surpasses similar efforts by scholars.[90] She commends the ways in which transnational networks of women's human rights activists articulate a collective understanding of human rights as "local and universal and contested [emphasis removed]" (p. 285). She seeks to bring *non-elite forms of knowledge* and *activist discourse* to the attention of academic political theorists. These non-elite knowledges are produced by women activists experienced in navigating human rights discourse and mechanisms and who use their insights as a basis for theory building (p. 286). Ackerly's direct acknowledgement of the theoretical value of activist experience is a step towards making activist informal learning an explicit object of analysis, as will be suggested by SML perspectives revisited in the next chapter.

This activist-knowledge-informed theory is distilled from activists' textual reflections by Ackerly, who sees her role as one of giving voice to nascent theory embedded in activist practices and texts. This assertion is alarming for its colonial resonances, though Ackerly does acknowledge the limitations of her approach. She recognizes that: 1) the cross-cultural theory of universal human rights that she extrapolates from her reading of activist texts is necessarily partial and provisional as it does not include all potentially interested contributors; 2) it is *her* interpretation of their work; and 3) that the activists' work is of a *collective, on-going nature* [emphasis added] (p.288). Her research consisted of reading through the texts of two online women's human rights activist groups that were focused on identifying best practices.[91] "Best Practices" is a productivity buzz word in NGO circles that has neoliberal overtones and is part of

the institutionalization of movement knowledges in NGOs, yet is also part of what of what activists have always done – talking about effective ways to achieve their goals.

She claims that activists offer "a cross-cultural theory of universal human rights that employs contingent universals and locally articulated norms for promoting women's human rights without sacrificing respect for values pluralism *within and across cultures* [emphasis added]" (2004, p. 296). She highlights several characteristics or accomplishments of this activist theory, which respects cross-cultural and inter-cultural diversity as well as the need for commonality. She notes that activists acknowledge non-elite forms of knowledge; operate inclusively, treating women as partners in the theory-generating project. She also stresses that that the activists' theory holds a non-static view of culture and is not dependent upon state actors. The main assumptions that underpin the activists' theory, which Ackerly suggests are rarely seen all together in theory generated by academics, are: 1) cross cultural diversity; 2) cultural change; and 3) internal cultural diversity. (p. 296) Certain groups might emphasize differences or commonalities more than others. "Thus the activists tell us that a universal human rights theory needs a theoretical methodology that requires critical attention to exclusion, exploitable hierarchies, coercion, and difference within and across cultures" (p. 298).

Importantly, for my argument, Ackerly refers to this as an example of "collective learning" (2004, p.295). Both words are significant in establishing a more engaged orientation to TFAK. As the SML literature and TF scholars such as Laura Briggs (2008) note, much activist intellectual work is collective in nature. It bears emphasizing that movement-based knowledge creation is deeply tied to activists learning ways forward through struggle. Ackerly's project centers activist discourse and collective learning and understands activism as "imperfectly collective, inclusive, non-coercive" (p.299). In other words, while transnational WHR activists

strive to be collective, inclusive, and non-coercive, they do so unevenly, imperfectly, and produce new ideas all the while.

Ackerly's suggestion for scholars is that they learn from activists' unique epistemological practices. She encourages scholars to follow activist models in their theorizing by: a) getting marginalized voices heard and non-elite forms of knowledge recognized; and b) using local and transnational dialogues effectively by verifying accurate linguistic and cultural translation (p.300-1). She addresses the gap between transnational activists and Western academics by offering a methodology and a theoretical argument for the specific knowledge forms generated by activists. In this way, she echoes arguments made in SML, though she doesn't cite this work. Ackerly emphasizes the imperfectability of this work, yet stresses the importance of: a) avoiding binary thinking and homogenization within categories; b) paying attention to activist strategies; c) developing nuanced intersectional analyses and pragmatic activist strategies; d) negotiating and learning from differences within and across categories; and e) remaining open to challenges that invite us to think through the limitations of our current paradigm in order to move towards a vision and reality of social justice. In other words, Ackerly holds up activist learning and knowledge practices as an example to scholars, while not sidestepping the question of their shortcomings.

It is important to note the limitations of Ackerly's argument, even while affirming its considerable methodological contribution to the field. One such limitation is the lack of specific discussion of the shortcomings that she acknowledges. Her failure to address power dynamics around questions of language, translation, and gate-keeping is troubling. The online groups that Ackerly studied operated in English and were moderated. The moderator's role included a gatekeeping function: moderators did not post messages that they deemed unclear or irrelevant,

exercising what Ackerly calls “discretionary exclusion” (2004, p.288). Messages were not rejected, but rather returned to writers with editorial suggestions on how to improve the “substance and language” (p.288). Ackerly acknowledges that such a practice could easily result in some members being marginalized and that the practice had to be closely examined; however she does not indicate any awareness of the coloniality of language politics or even of how “helpful” editing might be silencing. She further asserts that effective moderation allows for non-native speakers to be heard and not marginalized because of a lack of clarity or relevance.

Clearly the issue of Anglophone linguistic imperialism needs to be further addressed in such research and activism. If native English speakers, especially unilingual native speakers, moderated the list, it is possible that their own undetected ethnocentric biases around clarity and relevance and their preferred discourse style and terminology be assumed to be commonsense standards which are then imposed upon a multilingual English-medium context. The fact that “substance” and “relevance” are cited is also troubling, because it again assumes a preferred discourse style. The questions of linguistic and cultural imperialism are not approached self-reflexively in Ackerly’s argument.

Ackerly’s oversight is an important reminder that even in methodologically advanced arguments that take TFAK seriously and on their own terms, the complex power dynamics within activist network require ongoing reflection and critical scrutiny. As activist knowledges are amplified, such concerns warrant close attention, lest a simplistic inversion of knowledges transpire.

4.4.3 Discussion of social and conceptual organization in the fourth orientation. In these two texts by Conway and Ackerly we see uniquely movement knowledge-engaged approaches to TF scholarship. What are the implications of this more explicit orientation to TFA

knowledges? First and foremost, their work begins from an assumption that activist intellectual work is valuable, unique, *and* imperfect. Second, their texts are motivated by a desire to present the richness of activist knowledges to readers, *rather than driven by the imperative of critique*. Conway succeeds at presenting: a) a compelling contextualized discussion of feminist activist knowledges grounded solidly in activists' texts; b) her own analysis of developments in feminist organizing and thought in the context of anti-globalization and the WSF; as well as c) a critique of the knowledges that she foregrounds. This balanced approach avoids the celebratory tone of some Global Feminisms literature that leads to its dismissal by TF scholars. Likewise, Ackerly offers: a) a grounded discussion of an *everyday form* of activist intellectual work conducted through textual exchange; and b) a theoretical argument about a specific mode of knowledge production through praxis that she believes accomplishes more that similar scholarly efforts. Where Ackerly fares less well is in also addressing the shortcomings and ideological embeddedness of the activist practice and thought that she presents, and the question of Anglophone linguistic imperialism.

Neither Ackerly nor Conway transcend the inherent embeddedness of scholarship in institutionalized power dynamics that reserves expertise and theory-generation for scholars who ultimately pronounce upon their objects of analysis. Both do successfully demonstrate that there is important theoretical work done in movement contexts which can accomplish things that academic theory hasn't. The relationship between the different epistemological sites of North American academia and transnational activist feminisms is negotiated within conventional parameters and reflects some aspects of both the "as data" and the "collaborative praxis" approaches. Northern-based scholars study activist texts and extract pieces of information (as in the TFAK used as data approach). Both Conway and Ackerly also acknowledge collaborative

aspects of feminist knowledge production through transnational feminist exchanges. Ackerly highlights exchanges *between activists* and Conway looks at exchanges between activists and with academics. Both also center activist knowledges and texts as key objects of study, though Conway refers to the networks as her main object of study. In and of themselves neither of these approaches can be said to transcend the limitations of scholarly knowledge production. However the combined effect is enhanced by the way in which Ackerly and Conway both begin from the assumption that movement contexts of knowledge production are unique, rich, and yet ultimately compromised. In this orientation to transnational feminist movement-based *knowledges* as an "objects of analysis" we can see that implicitly TFAK are dealt with as something much larger: a different legitimate epistemological project with the gravitas accorded other academic disciplines. The intellectual value and labor of movement knowledges and activist experiential learning are acknowledged. TFAK are engaged for their capability to extend and counter TF academic knowledges. Thus, a subtle but important shift in scholarly orientation to TFAK is accomplished. It is a shift that involves a slight decentering of academic knowledges.

5. Conclusion

I began this chapter with the assumption that TFA knowledges matter. That assumption is based upon my own experiential learning in transnational feminist organizing and my analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the TFS and SML literature. In the previous chapter I reviewed the emergence of the term "transnational feminisms" in North American academic literature. I noted how, despite early invocations of the importance of feminist activisms "elsewhere," the primary sources of knowledge referred to in much TF scholarship are foundational theoretical texts written in English by diasporic and North American scholars working within the North American academy. I argue that even critical, interdisciplinary feminist scholarship is disciplined

citationally. By this I emphasize how what constitutes transnational feminist knowledges and feminist knowledge of the transnational is heavily circumscribed by the activating power of academic texts. These texts are admittedly path-breaking, even paradigm-shifting, yet canonical. They set forth the direction for developments in a critical framework for analysis informed by some degree of dialogue with feminisms elsewhere. Oddly, however, this engagement, though it did produce new lines of critique around the embeddedness of colonial epistemologies in Western feminisms, has been taken up by North American scholars in such a way as to circumscribe the exploration of TF/A by narrowing scholarly attention to critical citational trails through postcolonial and TF academic literature. It has not produced a critical epistemological framework that can effectively recalibrate academic and activist knowledges. Activists "elsewhere" are not engaged as interlocutors as an essential part of building more democratized TF knowledges.

In this chapter, alert to the effects of citational practices, and the overwriting of activist knowledges, I ask: how are scholars of Transnational Feminist Studies (TFS) socially and conceptually organized to relate to transnational feminist activist knowledge (TFAK)? I answered this question by employing a method of textual analysis, reading the academic literature for what is says about the forces that impact how scholars orient toward and engage TFAK. In so doing, I identify a number of conventional and subversive knowledge practices that serve to challenge and maintain the knowledge hierarchies and the disconnect between TFS and TFA. I also note how knowledge practices that socially and conceptually organize at this specific moment of the emergence of TF discourse in the NA academy, function as field-building mechanisms. I expose how stated and unstated orientations to TFAK are implied by and woven into certain knowledge practices. I argue that this nexus impacts how transnational feminisms are

understood and how the field of TFS develops. This also explains how the recentering around North American positionalities is linked to academic knowledge practices.

In reviewing some of the recent TFS literature, particularly the anthologies on TFA published in 2010, I found four main approaches to TFAK: 1) TFAK are absent; 2) TFAK are used as data; 3) TFAK are engaged through collaborative praxis; and 4) TFAK are an object of analysis in their own right. In delineating the difference between these approaches to activist texts and movement knowledges, I do not assert that they are discrete, ubiquitous, generalizable, or necessarily consciously employed. However, they are present, and they matter for what they reveal about the gap between TFA and TFS.

I hope to have shown readers how conventional scholarly practices—such as selecting, citing, and translating reference materials; compiling bibliographies; choosing bits of information from primary sources (disassembling TFAK into data) — and subversive knowledge practices, such as initiating collaborative research projects, with the intention to offset inequities, ultimately inform how TF scholars relate to TF activisms and activist knowledges. *I refer to these knowledge practices collectively as field-building mechanisms because these everyday knowledge practices function to shape the priorities and practices in the emerging field of TFS, in this particular case.* These familiar academic knowledge practices and products (gatherings, texts, etc) are employed routinely in academic institutional contexts. In defamiliarizing them and exposing some of their effects, I hope to have shown the reader that scholarly orientations to movement knowledges matter. As the field of TFS emerged and develops, paying close attention to how TFA knowledges are engaged is also an important critical scholarly knowledge practice.

I argue that TF scholars need to be more conscious about the ways in which they orient towards TFAK. My perusal of the reference lists of many feminist texts that use the term

transnational feminisms indicates that many scholars are not reading, or at least not citing, across disciplinary lines, IF/GF/TF frames, and theoretical paradigms. Perhaps they should, given the particular socio-historical moment of the rise of transnational feminist activisms, the burgeoning and diverse North American scholarship on transnational feminisms, the use of the term "transnational feminisms" to refer to both TFS and TFA. The disconnect might most simply be bridged by wider reading and citing across particular transnational feminist affinities. I argue that routine, everyday academic knowledge practices shaped a particular trajectory for the development of TFS with intermittent and shifting engagement with TFA epistemologies and knowledges. Such an approach would take seriously (informal) learning by activists and affected communities, as well as their knowledges. This approach sees TF activists not as informants or research subjects, but interlocutors — people whose agency and intellectual work is engaged critically on equitable terms by scholars.

In the discipline of Adult Education the sub-field of Social Movement Learning (SML) has made convincing arguments for the centrality of activist learning and knowledge production to social movements and social justice. Social movements are seen as important sites of learning and knowledge production. Implicitly or explicitly this poses a challenge to the Northern academy's supremacy and preferred forma and formats in terms of knowledge generation. TFS, while concerned with hegemonic practices *within* academic knowledge production, has on the whole been less effective than SML at decentering *academic* knowledge production itself. I argue that the necessarily collective nature of much movement-generated knowledge must also be recognized and engaged if this goal is to be achieved.

TF is a framework whose time has come. And happily, the prospect for ongoing attention to TFA within the larger project of TF has improved over the last decade. Maintaining this turn

away from predominantly citing transnational feminisms to recognizing the knowledge practices in the far-flung and fleeting sites of TFA can be advanced through securing an interdisciplinary conversation between SML and TFS. A context of sub-field-building is likely to take TFAK more seriously, due to SML's disciplinary focus on learning. Such an endeavor will also take the field of SML to task, given TFS's astute critiques of power/knowledge relations.

In the next chapter, we will see how the explicit focus on knowledge production and learning found in SML might improve scholarly engagement with alternative forms and practices of knowledge in/about TFA. I introduce some conceptual tools drawn from SML and discuss important nuances in orientations towards TFAK and informal learning. This will widen the range of options for how TFS scholars engage with TFA and their knowledges.

CHAPTER 7: MAKING TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ACTIVIST KNOWLEDGES (TFAK) VISIBLE: INTEGRATING SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING (SML) AND TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST STUDIES (TFS)

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The analysis presented in the previous two chapters exposes how orientations to TFA and TFAK are shaped in part by some familiar academic knowledge practices, including citational disciplining, or the combined influence of disciplinary foci and conventional knowledge production practices prevalent in the institutional context of North American universities. My synthesis of key theoretical and methodological tenets of Social Movement Learning (SML), Institutional Ethnography (IE), Political Activist Ethnography (PAE), and to a lesser degree, Grounded Theory (GT) suggests the epistemological and ethical importance of learning to consciously orient towards phenomena, practices, or texts (Charmaz, 2006; D. Smith, 2006; G. Smith, 2006). In this chapter I return to the interdisciplinary dialogue between TFS and SML which began in chapter 2. In this chapter I will sketch the outlines of the proposed synthesis of TFS and SML in light of the analysis of existing orientations to TFAK. I argue below that TFS scholars can learn to shift their orientations toward transnational feminist activisms and activist knowledges by integrating some theoretical and methodological insights from SML.

The synthesis of SML and TFS orientations and insights can make TFA informal learning and knowledge production more visible within both fields. Below, I first discuss the importance of recognizing differences between academic and activist epistemologies. I then explain how an interdisciplinary SML/TFS framework can effectively shift scholarly orientations toward movement knowledge practices and activist informal learning. The synthesis presented here is one of the methodological contributions made by this dissertation.

1. Knowledge Production Processes in Transnational Feminist Activisms (TFA): Activist Theory, Activist Research, Activist Pedagogies

The shift in scholarly orientations towards TFAK argued for above can be facilitated through conceptual tools offered by SML and activist-scholars. Some of these were introduced in chapter 3 where I presented a preliminary assessment of SML and various efforts to theorize movement knowledges and activists' experiential, tacit, and informal learning. SML scholars have begun analyzing the contextual specificities of activist epistemologies, including movement-based conventional knowledge production processes such as theory, research, and activism. In this section I introduce additional SML conceptual tools: activist theorizing, activist research, and activist pedagogies. I show how these movement-based knowledge practices unfold differently from academic knowledge production in order to make activist knowledge practices in TFA more visible to TF scholars.

1.1 Activist Theory: Movement-Relevant Theory (MRT) and Movement-Generated Theory (MGT)

Colin Barker and Laurence Cox (2002) present a detailed analysis of the differences between academic and activist theorizing in a conference paper that arose from a rambling conversation.[92] They proceed by comparing the field of Social Movement Studies (SMS) in Britain and activist theorizing with an eye toward developing "what a Marxist theory of social movements might look like" (p.1). Rather than dismissing academic work, Barker and Cox begin from the assumption that much academic work *is* useful to movements because it provides activists with much needed information, data, and ideas. They mention, for example, studies of income inequality, ecological studies, and lessons drawn from past movement histories (p.1). Barker and Cox, however, are unconvinced that SMS is producing movement-

relevant knowledge and express concern about the "parasitic" relationship between SMS and movement knowledges. This is a concern that I have highlighted in previous chapters. The authors seek to clarify two forms of knowledge production: academic and activist.[93]

I present Cox and Barker's findings to demonstrate the utility of approaches that take movement knowledges on their own terms and to draw attention to the type of distinctions that may reinforce the "disconnect" between TFS and TFA knowledges that I investigate in the thesis.[94] Mohanty and Alexander's (2010) recent assertion about the importance of exploring a) the genealogies of the "transnational" in activist spaces and b) "cartographies of knowledge and power" is relevant to an analysis of the discrepancies between TFS and TFA contexts and epistemologies (Mohanty and Alexander, 2010). As invocations of activism abound in feminist scholarship, it bears noting that these gestures emerge only to evaporate time and again. I have compiled Cox and Barker's distinctions between academic and activist theorizing into the following chart to visually highlight their model's binary framing.

Criteria compared	**Academic theorizing**	**Movement/activist theorizing**
Terms used to refer to intellectuals	Traditional (Gramsci) Established (Eyerman and Jamison) Academic (Barker and Cox)	Organic (Gramsci) Movement (Eyerman and Jamison) Movement (Barker and Cox)
How to become an intellectual?	Earn academic credentials, Demonstrate the ability to "suck up"	"Right to speak" by making one's own claim to represent; demonstrate commitment; media acknowledgement; publication; mentoring
Tasks	Write in narrow style Cite Perform middle class "hexis"	Varied: walk the walk, gain credibility ("obscure factors count: personal style, dress, behavior")

Accreditation (Accountability)	-To other academics -To institutional criteria -Stable requirements -Material rewards -Individual recognition	-to other activists [NGOs] -usefulness of the ideas -shifting political contexts
Who is cited?	Individual author(s)	Usually a collective (movement or group), sometimes a published author, [anonymous (not citable)]
Alignment	School of thought (discipline)	Activist group Movement
Audience	Other academics, usually in one's own field	Other activists, potential allies, opponents
Goals	Superior explanation	Practical proposal
Motivating question	What is the nature of the best explanation?	What should we do?
Forms of Knowledge	General Proposition	Case Proposition
Political stance	Avoid judgment	Acknowledge mistakes
Position	Observer	Participant
Orientation to knowledge production	Knowledge *about* movements	Knowledge *for* and *within* movements
Questions	[disciplinary concerns, citations]	Emerge from: the relationship to social world that they are trying to change, in relationship to movements
Arguments	Analysis, typically in which a single aspect is highlighted and compared	1) Ideological and moral justification for movement, 2) strategic and tactical proposal
Process	[research methodology]	Dialogical exchange with opponents, allies, and potential allies
Political alignment	With powerful	With marginalized
Mode of theorizing	Scholastic (teaching, text books and lit reviews) Cognitive analysis	Conflict Engagement Discovery

Chart compiled from Barker and Cox (2011, p.1-15) [my additions]

Rather than endorsing or critiquing each point, I am interested here in presenting the reader with an informative snapshot of what a comparative analysis of academic and activist theorizing might bring into view.[95] The general image of activist theorizing that emerges in Cox and Barker's writing resonates with work by political activist ethnographers particularly

in terms of the emphasis placed upon the differences between knowledge and theory produced *about* movements and *for* movements (Frampton et al, 2006).[96] It also supports my argument that the conventions that guide scholarly knowledge production also socially and conceptually organize orientations towards data, including activist knowledges.

In North America, Douglas Bevington and Chris Dixon (2005) develop an argument similar to Cox and Barker's (2002) about the gap between North American Social Movement Theory (SMT) and the priorities and concerns of social movements. Bevington and Dixon counter defensive scholarly critiques of activists by exposing a misfit between academic and activist interests:

> [s]o it does not appear that the main issue here is either 'anti-intellectualism' or [activists' ability to] access [theory]. Instead, as we have suggested, it seems to be a problem that activists are finding little of use among contemporary social movement scholarship. (p. 193)

The problem that they identify is that the conventional method of social movement theory-building, in which researchers or theorists work within the existing paradigms of their field to generate new theory by highlighting attention to different variables, ultimately results in theory that is irrelevant to and ignored by many activists (p. 185).

Bevington and Dixon offer an alternative approach for scholars seeking to produce MRT:

> Movement-relevant theory differs from previous approaches in that it does not seek to privilege a particular variable or set of variables in the lifecourse of a movement…Rather, movement-relevant theory emerges out of a dynamic and reciprocal engagement with the movements themselves. (p.190)

They suggest that researchers start with the concerns that activists are voicing. The three questions Bevington and Dixon propose are:

> [a] What issues concern movement participants?
>
> [b] What ideas and theories are activists producing?
>
> [c] What academic scholarship is being read and discussed by movement participants? (p.198)

These three questions alone might provoke a productive shift in the emphases of transnational feminist scholarship.

Being able to recognize movement-generated theory requires first that scholars recognize theory building in different sites and formats. Bevington and Dixon direct attention to "demonstrations, mobilizations, and direct actions" and "meetings, email discussions, conferences, online essays, public talks, zines, study groups, magazine articles, trainings, cultural events, social forums, encuentros, and consultas" (2005, p.194). All of these activist practices and texts are potential sources for encountering the embedded or explicit theorizing done by activists. Finding and reading these activist texts is one part of the process of shifting scholarly reading practices and orientations to scholarly knowledge.

A second important step is to learn to read the theory embedded within activist texts and practices. This is a skill that I teach in courses on activisms and transnational feminisms. I work with a feminist model of theory wherein theory is understood to involve description, explanation, and prescription (Tong, 1989). I suggest that when reading various texts written by activists, students notice: a) when activists *describe* situations or crises, b) how they explain (*analysis)* (the causes of) their problems, and c) what *strategies* they suggest for countering the problem they have described and analyzed. Charlotte Bench (2010) suggests that description,

analysis, vision, and strategy comprise theory. Learning to read activists' texts and their practices for components of theory, such as description, analysis, and prescription, helps us to recognize the epistemologies and theory-generating processes at work in different forms and in unfamiliar contexts.[97] There are certainly differences and tensions in the approaches that academics and activists adopt when producing, validating, and using theory (what activists often call their "analysis"). There are two approaches that can play an important role in the decentering of North American academic : a) teaching students to recognize these different forms of theory, and b) for scholars, taking time to do so, as well.[98]

The movement-relevant approach advocated by Bevington and Dixon (2005) is useful for: a) recentering movement concerns to guide activist-scholarship; b) identifying reading practices and sources; and c) highlighting existing venues for activist-generated theory. Significantly, the scholar-activists referenced above do not give up on theory or scholarship, but hope instead only to yoke both to the needs of social justice movements. There is a risk, however, in over-validating movement proximity and movement knowledge production, which must itself be subjected to critical analysis, lest they gain an unexamined epistemic privilege.

1.2 Activist Research

The term "activist research" has been used in discussions of research *on, for,* and/or *by* activisms and/or activists (Choudry 2008, Hale 2008). In this chapter I use the term "activist research" to refer to inquiry carried out *for* political action and *by* movement activists, with or without academic partners or academic training. This usage emphasizes activists' agency and positionality as researchers. This is a different usage from that advanced by Charles Hale and others that hinges upon scholarly, not activist, positionality: "the word 'activist' is meant as an adjective which qualifies or modifies the way that research methods are conceived and carried

out" (2008, p.13). In this more common usage of the term "activist research," activists are not necessarily research partners. The scholar is central to the research process. While meant to inform activism, some of this scholarship cycles through conventional peer-reviewed publication processes and emerges more slowly, at least in terms of a broader readership. The online movement-engaged journal *Interface* includes a section called "Research Notes," in which academic and activist researchers can make available their field notes and observations more quickly and informally (see http://www.interfacejournal.net/). This is counter-intuitive given the systems of tenure and reward for original research in NA academic institutions, but is expedient in terms of meeting social movements' needs. My emphasis on activist research *by* activists and *for* movements is not meant to discredit academic-activist collaboration but rather to focus my discussion on how movement-sited research by activists unfolds dialogically and from their contexts.[99] In so doing, some of the similarities and differences between TF academic, NGO, and grassroots movement research will become clearer.

Research is a method of knowledge production used in academic, scientific, bureaucratic, corporate, and activist/movement contexts. At the heart of research is a process of inquiry. The need or desire to know something drives this process. In Cox and Barker's (2002) analysis, summarized in the table in the previous section, academic and activist forms of research can be distinguished by: a) the degree and consistency of a methodical, systematized approach taken in the inquiry process; b) the motivation with which the inquiry is undertaken; c) the context within which research is conducted; d) the means of evaluating the results; e) the genesis of questions; and f) the types of answers sought.

Despite these differences and the common perception that academics necessarily

produce better, more objective research, it has been strongly asserted that movements can and do produce *rigorous* and *useful* research (Hale, 2008; Choudry, 2008). Still, activist-scholars Choudry and Kuyek caution that: "[w]e do not claim that all "activist research" is inherently progressive or rigorous, anymore than all 'academic' research can claim to be rigorous and immaculately constructed" (2012, p.26). Choudry and Kuyek acknowledge the significant role that movement-established research institutions can play for social movements. Within transnational feminist activism, organizations such as the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) have played a strong role in commissioning and disseminating movement-relevant research by activists, scholars, and scholar-activists (see www.awid.org).

Within academic institutions there are numerous institutional accountability mechanisms. Graduate students are explicitly trained in research methods and undergo extensive practice in choosing, justifying, applying, and considering the implications of research choices as part of doctoral studies. Tenure processes and peer-review of publications ensure ongoing external evaluation of the intellectual work of scholars. The reputation of scholarly research as rigorous is not unfounded. One can fairly ask: How is research rigor and accountability measured in movement contexts?

Aziz Choudry, the SML scholar who has written most pointedly about activist research, argues that movements can and do produce rigorous research *because the political stakes are high* (Choudry, 2009, p. 6; Choudry, 2008). With Devlin Kuyek (2012), he argues that research done by activists, including that undertaken by those with little formal research training and no university affiliation, is overlooked by scholars, yet essential to many social movements. The sites of struggle and knowledge production matter. This criticism echoes Bevington and Dixon's (2005) analysis of what North American activists read and produce. Kuyek and

Choudry urge activist researchers to be patient in the face of urgency, in order to "get the research right" so that it cannot be easily discredited by better funded corporate and state researchers (2012, p. 25-6).

Regarding accountability, Choudry (2011), Dixon (2011), and Barker and Cox (2002) all agree that ultimately activist research is judged by *how effectively it informs action*. Chris Dixon (2011) asserts that activist research is held accountable *within a network of relationships that sustain activism*: "relationships that come with expectations and expectations that come with consequences." At the same conference, Choudry (2011) concurs when he quips that research is embedded in action, or an (informal) cycle of "research-action-research-action" and so "you always check stuff out with people."

In my own experience of working in transnational feminist networks, activists engaged in research that was driven by the questions and challenges they faced in their struggles.[100] For example, in the early days of anti-trafficking work in Japan, activists and trafficked women mapped the routes that were used to enter Japan, documented the techniques recruiters used in Thai and Philippine villages, and calculated the debt system used to indenture labor. Similarly, Choudry and Kuyek (2012) emphasize two aspects of the development of activist research questions and agendas. The first is the importance of building trust and relationships with other activists and movements, which are integral to the unfolding of research, as such relationships inform and inspire research questions, agendas, and directions (p. 24). The second aspect that they emphasize concurs with George Smith's (2006) insights about other ways in which research agendas emerge, that is: through confrontation with ruling regimes and by using as material or data the insights and information gleaned through such conflict.

Finally, Kuyek and Choudry acknowledge two more distinctive characteristics of activist research: a) it is driven by urgency and strategic considerations; and b) it is rarely designed to produce a single textual output (2012, p. 26, 32). They note, echoing Bevington and Dixon (2005), that informal and formal dissemination of research are both important, but publication is not the most potent form of research sharing, as emails or phone calls can be used to transmit important understandings quickly and efficiently.

1.2.1 Implications for Transnational Feminist Scholarship (TFS). We can now see how: a) recognizing TFA research practices and b) accessing citable movement sources is an important task for TFS. TF scholars need to pay attention to who produces research, how, and in what contexts. TFA research can be conducted by university-affiliated activist-scholars, academics who work on a contract basis for NGOs, NGO in-house professional researchers, and by activists trained/untrained in research methodologies and/or ethics. Much TFA is loosely organized in informal networks, but major catalyst organizations and funded NGOs often facilitate and disseminate research. (See for example awid.org and http://www.dawnnet.org/.) Research can be constrained by the priorities of funding bodies, while smaller groups may not have the resources to hire professional researchers. There are many researchers conducting inquiries under widely different conditions for transnational feminist networks and social movements. For TF scholars, attention to the power dynamics that impact knowledges produced by TF self-organized groups, informal networks, and the larger funded NGOs is crucial. Mindful of the legitimate concerns about NGOs overwriting grassroots priorities, it is important to consider the role of research-focused TF organizations and networks through more empirical study.

Transnational feminist advocacy organization Just Associates (JASS) places a strong emphasis on creating knowledge as an important part of feminist movement building. JASS emphasizes its "holistic movement-building strategy" which includes a strong emphasis on learning and a special focus on "research and knowledge production" and "alliance building" (http://www.justassociates.org). In their explanation of "knowledge generating" activities they emphasize praxis and collective approaches that bring together "scholars, students, practitioners and activists…[because w]e value different types of knowledge from the conceptual and theoretical to the experiential and practical" (http://www.justassociates.org). JASS has produced two editions of the *Feminist Movement Builder's Dictionary* (2013). The original impetus came from a leading Latin American feminist advocate, Alda Facio, and subsequently an English version was produced by JASS with open-ended, work-in-progress—as opposed to a definitive—tone to the entries. JASS stresses the strengths of its approach to knowledge building and its ability to draw connections between activist and academic insights:

> The fusion and synergies between different ways of seeing and thinking allows us to uncover invaluable ideas and insights about power, strategy and how change happens. For us, how the knowledge is generated is as important as what is produced. Reflection and documentation go hand in hand with training, organizing and action. You'll notice that in many JASS publications the quotes and writing of grassroots activists are complemented by factual evidence and insights from leading scholars. We build on participatory processes of action research and systematization carried out in social justice work. In this way, JASS publications and materials are the product of lively collective analysis and thoughtful reflection, steeped in the realities of women's

lives and struggles. [Emphasis in original removed.]

(http://www.justassociates.org/en/generating-knowledge)

Being better informed about research priorities and practices amongst TFA can be an important touchstone for TFS scholars. It would allow TFS to incorporate a deeper ethic of movement-relevance of our work. Activist research demonstrates alternative means of setting agendas: along lines of struggle with ruling regimes (state, inter-state, corporate), and on a "need to know" or a "need to take political action" basis.

1.3 Activist Pedagogies and the Pedagogy of Activism

In this section, I will introduce two ways of thinking about the intersection of activism and pedagogy: "activist pedagogies" and the "pedagogy of activism."[101] Both of these notions create and/or disseminate forms of knowledge *for* and *through* social movement practices. Each of these conceptual tools can make the learning, knowledge production, power relations and their interrelatedness in TFA and SM contexts more visible to activists and scholars as they name particular constellations of knowledge practices. For activists, conscious awareness of how learning is embedded in larger processes such as NGOization offers the possibility of more conscious resistance to the surreptitious nature of this interpellation. Because much activism is at the forefront of challenging newly developed forms of oppression, people are often figuring things out as they go (learning). This means that knowledge production in an activist milieu often has a strongly exploratory and pedagogical dimension.

Pedagogies are not simply strategies used by teachers to teach students; they are knowledge production practices and processes (Sandlin et al, 2010). Some scholars posit three agencies of pedagogy: student, teacher, and the new knowledge that they produce together (Lusted cited in Lather 1991, p. 46). I understand pedagogy as dynamic, relational, shifting, and

reflexive /practices that occur either between people or through peoples' encounters with ideas, situations, institutions, groups, events, texts, images, stories, and so forth. These exchanges re/ produce knowledge (skills, insights, learnings, unlearnings), identities, subjectivities, consciousness (conscientization, awareness), and social relations. This definition is intentionally broad to encompass public pedagogies such as education via social or conventional media, classroom pedagogies, nonformal education including popular education (activist pedagogies), and the more informal pedagogy of activism.

"Activist Pedagogies" are the teaching and learning practices and processes used in nonformal educational opportunities created by activists. Such opportunities include training sessions, popular education, workshops, seminars, and courses offered on an ongoing, short-term or one-time basis. Popular and community education formats are well known to feminists. For transnational feminist activists, designing a workshop to be held at an international gathering involves some degree of overt pedagogical intent. Sometimes activists may want to share ideas and strategies. Sometimes they may structure opportunities so that they can learn from other people and movements. The International Feminist Dialogues at the World Social Forum are an example of this open-ended, intentional creation of pedagogical opportunities (Conway, 2011). In other words, activists set out to share ideas, reflections, and strategies as well as build analyses through comparative dialogue using consciously pedagogical approaches. In nonformal contexts the roles of learners and teachers can be simultaneous or shifting, whether consciously or not.

Activists also set out to learn particular skills, languages, and information deemed necessary to their work. As activists develop their analyses, they might try to disseminate their ideas. Activist pedagogies are often employed consciously and intentionally. Texts, images,

video clips, social media messages, and experiential activities are used. Activists often target certain groups inside or outside movements for particular messages or for particular kinds of learning, and they strive to collectively create effective slogans, chants, posters, practices, and symbols that convey the lessons they want to teach broader publics.[102]

1.3.1 Transnational feminist activist pedagogies: The Isis International Feminist Activist School. TFA groups rely heavily upon popular education and overtly political activist learning. For example, Isis Manila, one of the oldest transnational feminist organizations, runs an Activist School with various specific trainings. They use both the newer discourse of "movement-building" together with the older discourse of women's human rights (WHR):

> The Isis International Feminist Activist School provides capacity building in using media and communications for advocacy, social change and women's rights. The capacity building can take the form of in-house or onsite training workshops, seminars, roundtable discussions, and study tours.
>
> Whatever the form, Isis International explains that the School aims to:
>
> > [a] strengthen social movements and advocacies through the strategic use of media and information and communication technologies (ICTs);
> >
> > [b] enhance women's skills and knowledge in communication technologies; and
> >
> > [c] create a network of international women communicators.
>
> (http://www.isiswomen.org)

The professionalized language and tone indicate engagement with broader NGO discourses, however the movement-building emphasis is indicative of efforts to re-politicize social movements without completely disengaging from NGO networks. An Activist School took place in Manila in April 2014 on the subject of "Women Human Rights Defenders." Readers should note the stipulation about who can participate: marginalized and transpeople are

explicitly included and the implicit priority is integrating younger activists. Yet English language skills are a necessity, as the call for applicants specifies:

> This Isis International Activist School is for human rights or women's human rights advocates working in conflict and politically dangerous situations. Women, men and transpeople are all welcome. Priority will be given to those who represent marginalized communities/organizations. Young women leaders or women young to the women's movement, members of a network that needs strengthening, and human rights advocates working at the grassroots level from East and South East Asia are encouraged to apply. There is no age limitation to those applying, but priority will be given to those who have not had previous opportunities. The workshop Activist School will primarily be conducted in English, so proficiency in English is a requirement. We will look into requests for translators on a case by case basis. Given limited resources, however, this will only be provided if absolutely necessary.
>
> (http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?)

As the above quote demonstrates, the pedagogical dimensions of activism are important. The tension between inclusivity towards transpeople and the virtual exclusion of non-English speaking participants raises important questions about power and Anglonormativity in TFA.[103] In advancing a preliminary discussion of what a pedagogy of transnational feminist activisms might look like, TFS can offer important contributions to SML approaches.

1.3.2 The pedagogy of transnational feminist activisms (TFA): Extending the theorization of informal learning and knowledge production through transnational feminist scholarly (TFS) conceptual tools. I use the term "pedagogy of activism" to refer to processes by which informal (as opposed to nonformal) learning transpires, often while

embedded in various activist practices designed for other purposes (See Foley, 1999). In chapter 3, I provided an in-depth overview of the concept of informal learning followed by a discussion of movement knowledges. Two areas that have been under-theorized in SML can be addressed by the following questions: a) How does informal learning relate to knowledge production processes and practices in social movements?; and b) How do such processes and practices sustain and challenge power dynamics not only between activists and the power structures that they challenge but also between allies? I will limit myself here to showing how TF perspectives on power can help extend SML theories of informal learning and connect learning to knowledge practices.

Learning in TFA is fraught and contradictory. Given the legacy of Western feminist imperialism, it is particularly important in transnational feminist organizing to understand social location (positionality) or the ways in which activists are situated by the interlocking systems of oppression. Such activist positionalities also matter within the contexts of navigating the social relations of resistance. Inattention to these dynamics risks free run to colonialist, racist, and ethnocentric understandings that can undermine solidarity. Even when attended to, such tensions are by no means easy to address and offset. These cleavages are prevalent within national frames as well.

For scholars of transnational feminist studies, the questions that surround power inequities between women engaged in transborder anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, antiracist, and anti-sexist struggles are important. The frame of "global feminisms" has been dismissed by some TF scholars for celebrating cross-national collaborations between women's groups rather than taking a critical stance toward such discrepancies of power between putative allies (Mendoza, 2002). A focus on the pedagogical dynamics of movements can help activists,

advocates, and scholars map the social relations of resistance and better understand how power relations are navigated through learning and knowledge practices. Given the primacy within TFS of concern about understanding and addressing inequities between women within transnational feminist contexts, there is a need to map power relations between women who are differently socially located. Understanding the role that learning, experience, and the production of knowledge play in maintaining and resisting hegemonic power relations in and between various societies, globally, and in NGO and activist contexts is helpful.

My experience of TFA alerted me to what might be called the coloniality of pedagogy, which can amount to Northern/one-third world women teaching Southern/two-thirds world women: a) to think about their lives in particular ways, such as through workshops on human rights, or b) to emphasize particular categories of identity and systems of oppression, even through the lens of intersectionality. Yet, I have also witnessed skillful appropriation, re-purposing, and resistance to these tools and dynamics, as needed. Given the concerns of critical, antiracist, and postcolonial feminist studies, simply documenting *that* feminists who work in transnational activist contexts are learning and producing new knowledge is not enough. It is perhaps in this overlap between informal and nonformal movement learning that insights into social struggles around the coloniality of pedagogy might be explored. Well-intended trainings can impact colonialist messages and reinforce class-based schisms in women's organizing. Counter-hegemonic knowledge practices demand simultaneous attention to consciously employed activist pedagogies as well as to the more subtle pedagogical nature of activism.

SML valorizes a key insight into activist work that stayed with me after my time working in TF networks. As activists, we don't simply learn as a part of engaging in struggle. We often also set out to teach and, where possible, change how issues are framed and how

people think. The pedagogical framing, as I understand it, is implicitly *relational* and brings questions of social relations to the fore.[104] Activism in its teaching and learning dimensions is relational and involves ongoing negotiation of power relations. People position themselves and others as teachers, mentors, and so on in ways that can challenge and reinforce the social relations of ruling within relations of resistance. An important question to ask of the pedagogies enacted in activist contexts is: how do they re/produce, challenge, or subvert inequitable social relations between activists, between different groups in society, and between nations and regions?

2. Shifting Orientations to Informal Learning (and Knowledge Practices): From learning *about* TFA to learning *with, for, in,* and *from* TFA

In this section, I continue the synthesis of TFS and SML by integrating insights from the methodological framework and textual analysis presented in the dissertation. In chapter 6, orientations to texts emerged as an important focus. In advancing a synthesis of SML and TFS approaches, I want to argue for the *importance of consciously choosing an orientation* to activist learning and knowledge in TF academic research. Conventional transnational feminist scholarship on TFA is a form of knowledge production *about* TFA. Movement-engaged scholarship, such as Activist Scholarship and (Feminist) Action Research, has also carved out a small space within the academy, enacting a shift towards learning *with* movements and producing research *for* movement and community needs. Then, too, SML scholars Hall and Clover (2006) offer two different ways to orient towards learning in relation to social movements: “The distinction between 'learning *in* movements' and 'learning *from* movements' draws attention to different types of learning, through participation in movement activity and to the wider public education that is often critical to achieving social movement goals” [emphasis

added] 2011, p.114). As Adult Educationalists they approach *learning* as a central object of analysis or study. Below I consider the implications of consciously shifting orientations towards TFA learning and knowledge production for TFS from learning and producing knowledge *about* TF activisms to learning *with, from,* and, most importantly for my argument, *in* TFA. That is, I show that the existing TF scholarship that does study TFA might be improved by approaching TFA not as an object of study. Instead, they can learn to conduct research in dialogue with movement knowledges as autonomous forms of knowledge.

2.1 Learning and Knowledge Production *about* TFA: Conventional Approaches to TFA as an Object of Analysis

In chapter 6, I identified an approach—"orienting to TFA as an object of analysis"—which is essentially an orientation towards producing knowledge *about* (and thereby *learning about*) activism through TF research on TFA. I have argued that within this approach ways of relating to activisms and activist knowledges are socially and conceptually organized and even over-determined by conventional academic practices—such as drawing research questions from disciplinary foci and referencing and citing key theoretical texts. Recall that this differs sharply from the way activist research questions are generated (refer to chart above). I refer to this constellation of conventional knowledge practices as citational disciplining. These practices make it likely that researchers who study TFA will seek to *produce knowledge about* TFA and that such research typically involves documenting and analyzing particular aspects of activist practices, which in turn often treats activist thought/texts as (primary) data. I have taken issue with the epistemological effects of subsuming one form of knowledge to another. In the scholarly material that I have analyzed, I have found that academic knowledges tend to overwrite activist knowledges. My intention is not to make a straw dog of this line of inquiry, as

all knowledge production entails an element of appropriation/epistemic violence. Rather, I assert that an orientation towards learning *about* has certain limitations that learning *from, with, for*, or *in* social movements might not.

2.2 Learning *with* and Producing Knowledge *for* TFA: Activist Scholarship

The shift in orientation to learning *with* movements and producing knowledge *for* movements is already addressed in a loosely connected transdisciplinary body of "activist scholarship" that goes by that name as well as by (Feminist) Action Research (F)AR and Community Based Action Research, (CBAR). These approaches emphasize: a) activist-scholars learning in solidarity with movements and communities in struggle; b) learning through active participation in such struggles; c) producing research in service to social movements and communities in struggle; and d) developing more equitable research relationships that do not cause harm to community partners. As these approaches to bridging the academic-activist divide are better known, I do not discuss them at length here. I simply want to emphasize that these approaches involve a shift in orientation, that is a shift out of conventional scholarly research stances, and a shift towards research subjects, research partners, and activists. That shift can be called an orientation towards learning and researching *with* and *for* social movements as the relationship between academic research and activist partners is addressed and movement needs are considered. There exists a small body of TF scholarship from these perspectives.[105]

2.3 Learning *from* TFA for those not Involved in Movements

Hall and Clover's quotation above alludes to the learning that people do outside of movements due to the ideas that movements generate. They refer to this as learning *from* movements and imply that such learning is a mark of success for a social movement. Scholars

of all stripes can be included in the wider publics "outside" of movements. Recall that Jamison's (2006) analysis implies that when movement knowledges penetrate mainstream consciousness, they often lose their edge or are taken over by more formal institutions. At a very basic level social movements do seek to teach, inspire, or even force people to think and act differently. A shift towards acknowledging learning *from* movements would mean at the simplest level acknowledging this intellectual debt. Scholars might ask: How much have scholars learned *from* movements? What about the ideas that are mobilized within movement-focused research? Asking such questions is an important step in decentering academic knowledges vis-à-vis activist knowledges. At a more profound level, such a shift would mean that we recognize that scholars are also part of the broader publics which social movements seek to address and who learn/have learned a great deal from movements, directly and indirectly.

Do we know when the analyses and theories with which we engage are informed by ideas first generated in social movements (Briggs, 2008)? If Jamison's (2006) analysis of scientific knowledge production, discussed in chapter 3, holds true for other fields of knowledge, then the answer is: probably not. For many scholars our own learning *from* various social movements may be hard to trace. Conventional knowledge hierarchies, dominant understandings of individual ownership of ideas, memos on reporting plagiarism, and conventional citational practices all play a part in this unwitting disavowal of popular and collective roots of some of the ideas which we learn and produce. We know, as academics, that it is profoundly important to give credit where credit is due. And so, when the specter of the largely unacknowledged intellectual debt to social movements punctures the fantasy of individual authorship, one can hardly fault an earnest scholar for asking, as Laura Briggs

does: “How do we cite movement knowledges?” (Briggs, 2008). In order to answer Briggs’ provocative question, we need to be able to know where ideas originated and have a way of acknowledging collective, popular sources of knowledge.

2.4 Learning and Knowledge Production *in* TFA: Approached as an Object of Analysis

The main shift that an adult education inflected SML approach would suggest to TFS is to focus on the informal learning and knowledge production that transpire *in* TF activist milieu. The simplest version of this approach would begin with the recognition/assumption that learning happens in TFA contexts. Beyond that any assertions made would be generated from empirical study. Following SML approaches, TFS researchers can make *learning and/or knowledge production in* TFA sites, networks, and contexts their object of analysis, *rather than* studying *activisms, per se*. This is not a radical shift in methodology. It would involve researchers designing their studies of TFA through an interdisciplinary lens, which combines SML’s explicit focus on learning with relevant TFS approaches. Rather than examining a particular TF network or conference as an object of analysis, the researcher would focus on the learning or knowledge production that transpires within the chosen context. Janet Conway’s work on feminist knowledges at the World Social Forum is a good example of this (2010, 2011, 2013).

Making the learning and/or knowledge production that happens *in* TFA contexts an object of empirical study is an important potential contribution of a combined TFS/SML approach to research about TFA. For example, empirical study of (informal) learning and knowledge production could involve: a) documenting; b) categorizing; c) analyzing the impact of such learning on individuals, communities, institutions, and societies; and d) mapping social

relations. Each of these will be discussed below. All make possible some push back against academic overwriting of movement knowledges.

2.4.1 Documenting the learning that happens in transnational feminist social movements. Documenting the learning that happens in social movements is important for currently-engaged activists as well as future movement participants. Both the content and processes of learning can be documented through interview-based research, participant observation, document analysis, videography, or ethnographic studies. SML scholar Donna Chovanec (2009) has done an ethnographic study of political learning amongst women in Arica, Chile through anti-dictatorship activism. While her work is not transnational, but focused rather on the local and national scales, it is still a useful model for research seeking to document what and how women are learning in resistance movements.

Documentation of activist informal learning can be intrinsically linked to documenting the new knowledge being generated in TFA sites. The SML literature points out that much learning happens in the struggle to think of new ways to resist oppression. Scholars of transnational feminisms who follow movement developments could learn of newly emerging ideas, analyses, strategies, and processes more quickly if they followed the learning in activist contexts more closely. It is important for scholars of TFA to keep up with what activists are thinking and doing. Peer-reviewed publication timelines are a serious impediment to dissemination of timely knowledges. The *content* of activist thought, in and of itself, is an important resource.

2.4.2 Categorizing the learning in transnational feminist struggles. Empirical studies of TFA would contribute to the SML field by producing research on explicitly *feminist* and *transnational* movements, which have not been well-represented in the SML literature to date. It

could also sustain the emerging TFS interest in non-academic and movement sites of knowledge production about the transnational (Mohanty and Alexander, 2010). As shown in chapter 3, researchers and theorists have produced various understandings of informal learning. SML research on TFA might refine or expand these taxonomies through inductive or comparative research or by highlighting the specific variables that differentiate and/or inform explicitly *feminist* and/or *transnational* organizing in *particular* contexts. The literature on informal learning argues that such learning can be intentional, structured, mentored, conscious, emancipatory, embedded in action, or not. Empirical case studies of transnational feminist activist learning might contribute new insights to this theorization. TFS/SML approaches could produce new taxonomies of learning and forge deeper understanding of power relations in TFA by combining well developed, nuanced analysis of power relations both within communities of struggle and within the larger contexts of resistance, as well as exploring with how these power dynamics articulate to the content and processes of learning.

2.4.3 Analyzing and interpreting the role and impact of transnational feminist activists' (TFA) learning. A focus on learning *in* TFA might extend to include analyzing the role of learning in advocacy and organizing work, the role of learning in processes of NGOization, and the implications for other struggles. We have seen in chapter 3 that research on informal learning shows that it can lead to mobilization and/or demobilization. Researchers might ask: is this true in TFA contexts? Under what conditions? What insights are specific to transnational and/or feminist activisms? Being able to see the sometimes invisible benefits of social movement participation, such as learning, deepens our understanding of why people engage and persist in resistance. Yet, the costs too must be accounted for. Chovanec's (2009) findings are sobering: informants reported high levels of unhappiness and despair after their

political education and movement activism.[106] What might an empirical study of transnational feminist reflections on their learning reveal?

Another approach might be to conduct comparative analyses of the specificities of learning in various TFA contexts — NGOs, street protest, mass movement, informal networks, and TANs. This would help to resist the reification and homogenization of the category "activisms" and provide empirical data to consider in arguments about NGOization. TFS scholars might be interested in understanding how learning reinscribes or challenges power dynamics between nations, groups in and across different nations, and within activist communities.

Learning is also an entry point: being able to see what it is that people engaged in social movement contexts are learning helps us to see where debate, fault lines, and contestation happen and how interpellation by hegemonic discourses develops as advocates are socialized into NGO or IGO norms. Focusing on learning in TFA can help TF scholars map the social relations of resistance and struggle. TF scholars and activists working in other contexts might find interesting and useful the descriptions of how and what other activists are learning. For example, Claire Slatter[107] of the early Southern feminist network Development Alternatives for Women (DAWN) discusses DAWN members' "steep learning curves" when beginning to participate in UN World Conferences and NGO Forums (http://www.wunrn.com/news/2009/06_09/06_22_09/062209_women's.htm. Accessed January 2, 2014.) She acknowledges the interwoven processes of learning to participate in UN and NGO forums and maintaining the ongoing commitment to "building critical South feminist analyses of global issues" and to gender mainstreaming. However, from a joint SML and TFS perspective, a closer analysis of how advocates have fared in the difficult task of balancing

commitments to constituents and to movements in the face of the highly interpellating aspects of such UN engagements would reveal much. What role does learning play in professionalization? In NGOization?

2.4.4 Mapping the social relations through/of learning *in* TFA. Paying attention to the learning that happens *in* TFA contexts is a rich entry point from which scholars can trace the social relations of knowledge production in TFA contexts, amongst or between activist groups, movements, and the institutions they challenge or ally with. If researchers can see what and how people are learning, we can trace where new ideas are incubating, how struggles between activists over strategy, frames, etc. are waged, as well as how race, class, gender and other factors shape activists' learning.

2.4.5 Some final comments on learning *in* TFA as a research focus. The suggestion that scholars shift their orientation from learning *about* TF movements to studying the learning that transpires *in* movements might be achieved by a fairly conventional interdisciplinary methodology. The use of concepts, foci, and theories from SML by transnational feminist scholars can, however, also be part of a more profound shift towards greater recognition of activist pedagogies and epistemologies on their own terms. If TFAK are taken seriously, such recognition may shed light on new approaches to learning and knowledge production, as well as raise questions about conventional academic practices. It is true that conventional knowledge production power dynamics are in place in interdisciplinary scholarship, as researchers retain their roles as analysts of data and interpreters of phenomena. However, the sharper focus on (informal) learning suggested by SML brings to light something that the "object of analysis" approach often buries: the learning, the ideas, and the concepts that activists develop. This refocusing of research questions through the lens of SML is a conventional interdisciplinary

approach that is modestly subversive, holding within itself an implicit question about whose knowledge and knowledge generation strategies deserve attention and documentation. In these ways a synthesis of TFS and SML approaches holds the promise of contributing to the formidable task of decentering North American academic knowledge production, including TF scholarship.

Scholars of TFS can benefit from thinking clearly about the implications for our scholarship of the learning and knowledge production that takes place in movement contexts. These prepositions – *about, for, with, from*, and *in* – reveal much about how scholars position themselves vis-à-vis the learning that happens due to social movements. To move towards a critical epistemological framework that takes TFA and SM knowledge production seriously, TF scholars can conduct interdisciplinary research that emphasizes learning with, from, and in movements.

3. Conclusion

The shift in orientation suggested in this chapter necessarily involves a more conscious recognition and thinking through of the epistemological processes and practices at play in TFA, informal learning, and knowledge production. By orienting differently to movement knowledges and activist learning along the lines suggested by SML, TFS scholars might learn as much *from* as they do *about* TF activists. This shift in scholarly orientations to TF movement knowledges and TFA texts holds promise for a more effective decentering of North American academic knowledges. It might also help create more equitable interlocution between these different sites of knowledge production. As non-academic modes and sites of transnational feminist knowledge production are given greater priority, scholars can learn to see, by comparison, the limitations of even our best approaches. Ackerley's reading on the implicit

theory of WHR activists in the previous chapter is an example of finding models in activist intellectual work that surpasses academic work on a given problem.

In the preceding chapters, I have chosen to focus on the institutional, social, and conceptual organization of contexts of learning and knowledge production. These contexts rise to the fore as important determinants of the constitution of academic and activist forms of knowledge. What happens if we resituate North American academic feminist knowledges within a broader horizon that includes multiple sites, varied institutional contexts, and different modes of transnational feminist knowledge production? The successes and failures of TFA knowledges can productively challenge the epistemological, research, and pedagogical practices in Northern universities. If engaged with as something more than data, with attention to the specificities of their contexts and modes of production, TF activist knowledges can impact how academics organize our syllabi, conceptualize research, theorize struggles and resistance, as well as select, read, and cite texts. I have suggested above that consideration of familiar modes of knowledge production that also transpire in activist milieu are an important entry point for scholars seeking to engage movement knowledges. Scholars must learn to read activists' written and visual texts and their practices for components of theory, such as description, analysis, and prescription.

Activist theory, activist research and activist pedagogies warrant a more considered place in the literature of TFS because activists are doing similar work -- theorizing how to deal with complex interlocking systems of oppression -- collectively through comparative analysis across multiple linguistic and political contexts of struggle. In the next and final chapter I discuss the implications of my findings and the methodological and theoretical contributions made by this dissertation.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION: SITING/CITING TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ACTIVISMS/ACTIVIST KNOWLEDGES (TFA/K) IN TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP (TFS)

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION: SITING/CITING TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ACTIVISMS/ACTIVIST KNOWLEDGES (TFA/K) IN TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST SCHOLARSHIP (TFS)

In this dissertation I suggest that transnational feminist scholars should move towards a more conscious ethic of learning from TF movements and understanding the unique aspects of TFA epistemologies. I argue that the disjuncture between the activist and academic practices of Transnational Feminisms has not been a major preoccupation for North American-based transnational feminist scholars because it has not been visible as such. Janet Conway has provided a corrective lens for this oversight in her compelling analyses of the epistemological vibrancy and variety of transnational feminist activist knowledges within the World Social Forum context (2010, 2011, 2013). Yet, I am concerned that while some excellent empirical and collaborative case studies have been done quite recently, the North American academic transnational feminisms discourse is developing without sustained interlocution with transnational feminist activists. I also believe that this discourse recenters the North American-based scholar. A recent argument by Leela Fernandes (2013) shares this concern with the recentering of North American academic positionalities, making reference to their unwitting complicity with state agendas, yet it leaves much of the question of activist knowledge production aside.

I deal with the problem of the "disconnect" between North American academic and TFA knowledges in two ways within this dissertation. First I explore *how* this disjuncture emerged on the North American academic side. I use a creative blend of Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Political Activist Ethnography (PAE) to inform a textual analysis of the academic literature on TFA. The academic literature is read as data that can provide answers to the question: how is TF socially and conceptually organized, particularly through conventional knowledge practices?

Second, I turn to the emerging field of SML to highlight the learning and knowledge practices in movements and to propose a more sustained interdisciplinary project between SML and TFS.

Broadly speaking, this dissertation is aligned with other similar, long-standing efforts to decolonize knowledge production.[108] I believe addressing this problem is important for North American-based scholars. I hope to have convinced the reader that transnational feminist thought disseminated through academic texts can overwrite insurgent movement-based knowledges. This can happen even though many feminist scholars are grounded in communities in struggle, have commitments to social justice projects, collaborate with activist partners on research initiatives, link their own research to movement needs, and invoke movements as a source of inspiration and sustenance. North American Women's and Gender Studies (NAWGS) scholars have been engaged in a decades-long struggle to acknowledge "other" modes of generating theory, ideas, analyses, and strategies of resistance, as they explore and produce new ideas. Yet, can we say that this commitment has resulted in sustained practices of decolonizing methods of knowledge production that are not recoupable by neoliberal knowledge logics and economies? A decentering of academic knowledge production through which NAWGS scholars can learn more directly from TFA thought, strategies, successes, and failures remains somewhat elusive. I have explained herein how, actually, the familiar everyday practices of TF academic knowledge production can undermine its political intent to be in solidarity with TF movements.

This dissertation invites readers to explore the ways in which we compartmentalize knowledge bases even as we contest the academic-activist binary. I argue that this is due in no small part to the conventions of academic scholarship. Throughout the dissertation I examine how conventional scholarly knowledge production practices contribute to the sidelining of the intellectual work of activists, even in scholarship that is purportedly focused upon such activism.

I do so by offering a textual analysis of how transnational feminist scholars engage with TFA and their knowledges and of how this engagement is socially and conceptually organized by conventional scholarly practices, such as selecting, citing, and referencing particular (usually academic) texts. In so doing, I hope to expose some scholarly orientations to movement knowledges that are hidden by conventional citational and academic knowledge practices. I believe that defamiliarizing these practices is an important part of creating new orientations to reading and otherwise engaging TF activist texts and knowledges. I attempt throughout the dissertation to think transnationally and comparatively about the production of movement knowledges, from both TFS and Social Movement Learning (SML) perspectives.

Below, I recap my argument, discuss limitations, outline the contributions made by the dissertation, and address future research, curricular, and pedagogical directions.

1. Recap

I began this dissertation with a description of two entry points into transnational feminisms. My experience of the disjuncture between the worlds of TFA and North American TFS was then taken as my research problem. I asked how this "disconnect" was socially and conceptually organized on the academic side, particularly as the transnational feminisms frame was emerging in the North American academic literature. Underneath this line of questioning was an insistence that movement knowledges are unique and matter—an insistence that was based upon my own tacit knowledge gained through participation in multilingual TFA networks in Asia and shored up by emerging work on social movement learning. Knowing that NAWGS developed with the North American women's movements and feminist activisms as touchstones likely influenced my expectation that TF theorists would look to women already long engaged in such struggles for direction and insight. Undeniably, my first-hand encounter with Asian

feminist activist thought informed and continues to informs my assertion that much can be learned from TFA and their knowledge-making practices.

As a graduate student, I struggled to make sense of the disjuncture between these worlds, as well as the confusion between similar terms such as "international feminisms" and "global feminisms." When I encountered dismissive critiques of TFA in classroom discussions or naïve presentations at conferences, such as proposing colonialist study abroad programs as a manifestation of transnational feminisms, I knew something was amiss. My own experiential knowledge base grounded me. It tempered my reception of certain lines of analysis and critique, including the overly dismissive tone of some critiques of NGOization. While I had both witnessed and missed some of the problems that such critique points to, I had also seen that it was often activists on-the-ground who were at the forefront of questioning these very risks. Their questioning of hegemonic forces was later echoed, but not necessarily cited, by North American-based academic critiques of NGOization. Likewise, while I concur with postcolonial feminist critiques of TFA in terms of their emphasis on inequitable, colonialist, and racialized power relations between differently situated women, I also noticed that the ways in which I had seen activists on-the-ground challenge those very dynamics were often overwritten by North American university-based scholars' critiques and in feminist classrooms.[109] Accordingly, throughout this dissertation I attempt to stay grounded in my activist knowledge base and not to be too swayed by the lines of inquiry and critique that were most compelling to North American-based TF scholars.

From political activist ethnographer George Smith I took the idea of "bracketing" disciplinary, theoretical, and expert views, so that the types of understandings that my activist allies had shared were not erased or overwritten by similar analyses articulated from North

American critical academic positionalities. From antiracist feminist work on intersectionality and positionality I took the imperative to realize that any activist understanding, including my own, was partial and likely suffered from unconscious interpellation by hegemonic social relations and the inherent blind spots of any given positionality. George Smith's suggestion not to idealize activist knowledges resonates with similar feminist insights. It also confirms my experience of the troubling power dynamics within the TFA milieu.

My informal activist learning prompted my attempt to work my way through the academic literature as inductively as possible, reading the literature as a kind of data that could help me piece together the social organization of the disjuncture that I was investigating. I discovered that despite the insightful cacophony of over forty years of multi-sited, multilingual TFA knowledge building, a reader can encounter key Anglo-American transnational feminist scholarly texts that proceed as if this sphere of knowledge production was is inaudible, uncitable, or in/conveniently sited elsewhere only for scholarly inspiration, case study material, and/or the occasional truncated dialogue.

It has been fruitful to have moved from immersion in one particular TFA site to immersion in a very different location (a North American university) for the last decade. (Re-) encountering TFA groups online has confirmed some of my earlier suspicions about the professionalization of social change work (Lunny, 2005). The power dynamics within movement contexts, particularly the hegemonizing role of larger NGOs, have a number of disturbing effects that certainly warrant critical and empirical scrutiny. It is important to note, however, that one sees a more thorough integration of academic- and movement-generated thought in the professionalized TF NGOs and TANs.[110] This provokes my curiosity as to what a comparative analysis of the impacts of the institutionalization of feminist activism in the North American

academy and in the transnational feminist movements/NGOs might reveal. Before I turn to such future implications and directions, however, I will first address the limits of my study.

2. Limitations

There are some limitations to my study. In terms of the interdisciplinary dialogue which this dissertation begins, I do not look evenly at the two fields of SML and TFS. I focus on the weaknesses of TFS from a former activist-, institutional ethnography-, and social movement learning-inflected stance. I have engaged the SML literature less as an object of critique and more for what it has to offer a re-orientation of North American TF scholarship. Feminist readers might want a sharper critique of the sexism in SML literature. On the other hand, SML scholars might note that I do not explore in great detail some important distinctions and connections between individual and collective learning (Kilgore, 1999). Scholars of both fields might expect an interdisciplinary dissertation addressing TFS and SML to offer an empirical case study of TFA.

Instead, I have taken as my cases, first, the academic literature that marked the emergence of TF discourse, and second, the moment at which a clear anthologized focus on transnational feminist *activisms* appeared. That second case was used to sketch a very preliminary "typology" of orientations to transnational feminist activist *knowledges*. Certainly, with such a limited sampling of texts, it would be erroneous to imply that the orientations that I identify necessarily exist in other bodies of literature. The findings are not presumed to be generalizable to other literatures. Furthermore, I do not offer a nuanced analysis of the many differences between forms of transnational feminist activisms and advocacy (see Conway, 2010, 2011, 2013 for extended discussions of differences among TFA.)

While the above limitations might be excused given the structure and methodology of the dissertation, there are two more troubling limitations. First, my project enacts the same recentering dynamic that it critiques. I examine North American English language academic literature rather than multi-lingual activist thought and texts. While this choice makes sense in terms of the research questions, my methodological framework, and the findings that I offer, it is also complicit with an overly self-referential tendency in some critical North American scholarship.

More troubling to me is a risk inherent in my own conclusion. I demonstrate that there is a need for a synthesis of TFS and SML approaches. While conceived of as a way to make visible and audible the movement knowledges generated in TFA sites, ultimately this approach can serve to extend the reach of academic feminist knowledge production. It may be the case that North American academic knowledge production is slightly decentered by the acknowledgement of alternative TF/A epistemologies. This decentering is in terms of how North American-based scholars understand transnational feminist knowledges. In the TFA milieu, some professionalized NGO-style organizations already integrate North American academic theory as one strand of hybrid feminist thought, whereas Western feminist scholarship might be ignored by, or deemed irrelevant to, more place-based grassroots groups.[111] In other words, North American academic feminist knowledges are not central to many transnational feminist groups, though they may be used when relevant. If North American academic feminist knowledges are not central to much TFA, then the language of decentering is not appropriate. This is not to undermine the importance of constant vigilance around the potentially hegemonizing flow of English language feminist knowledges, academic and otherwise. My intention has not been to encourage further mastery of different TF terrains but to unsettle the assumptions of a TF

predicated upon North American scholarly positionality. However, these two processes are uncomfortably intertwined.

3. Contributions

3.1 Interdisciplinary and Methodological Contributions

This interdisciplinary dissertation makes a number of methodological contributions, both conventional and unconventional. In terms of conventional interdisciplinary contributions, I have begun a promising dialogue between TFS and SML, two simultaneously emerging sub-fields with formative relationships to social movements. I offer the first preliminary comparative analysis of the two fields that I know of. I have argued for how SML perspectives can offer TFS, at the very least, a new appreciation for movement knowledges, insight into the epistemologies of knowledges produced in activist milieus, and awareness of the important role of informal learning in struggle. All of these issues can lead to new methodologies, new research foci, and new conversation partners. On the other hand, TFS can offer SML better developed and more integrated critiques of power, transnational and intersectional frameworks that account for multiple and intersection oppressions, and conceptual tools to sharpen the focus on gendered and other power dynamics within social movements and SML scholarship.

My second interdisciplinary contribution is the detailed methodological synthesis of SML and TFS frameworks for studies of TFA presented in chapter 7. Together these two frameworks can be used to more sharply draw out how activist learning relates to knowledge practices and power dynamics. Power relations — between movements and their targets; between advocates and their constituents; and among putative allies in movements, which now include grassroots groups and well-funded NGOs — can be better examined. Such an approach builds upon the successful aspects of the collaborative TF (research) praxis model (Swarr and Nagar, 2010).

More importantly, a well-honed focus on the epistemologies of TFA can help to mitigate against the recentering of North American-based TF scholars' agency and positionality. While SML/TFS interdisciplinary scholarship cannot claim to radically decenter North American academic feminist positionality in terms of the research process, the results of orienting differently to the intellectual work of TFA, as well as of taking TF movement knowledges on their own terms, do have an important role to play in the gradual, episodic decentering of Western academic knowledges. Further, a synthesis of SML and TFS can advance activist and movement-relevant scholarship by acknowledging and making visible activist epistemologies.

As for the broader implications of the suggested interdisciplinary synthesis, I hope to have convinced the reader of the importance of serious engagement with the ideas and strategies emerging from movement contexts, not merely as data or objects of analysis for scholarly study, but as a source of ideas, interlocution, and epistemological innovation. A more far-ranging implication of my analysis is that activist knowledges can be used, and cited, as expert knowledge in research on issues and topics other than TFA *per se*.

Methodologically, my project takes an unconventional approach to staging an interdisciplinary dialogue between TFS and SML, namely by way of an unorthodox application of certain key tenets of IE and PAE. I developed this approach to effectively address the nature of the disjuncture that I identified between two different sites of TF and their epistemologies — TFA milieus and the North American academy. My task was first to explore the social and conceptual organization of this disjuncture on the North American academic side and only then to explore an interdisciplinary solution to this gap. This required some patience, as I proceeded slowly in order to discover some of how this gap between different transnational feminisms was socially and conceptually organized by conventional scholarly knowledge practices and

orientations. The theoretical and methodological choice that I made was to blend insights drawn from IE/PAE into a new way of conducting textual analysis. My original contribution to methods is to read TF academic literature a*s data*, looking for the ways in which conventional academic knowledge practices and the TFS academic literature itself socially and conceptually organizes scholars' approach to TFA and their knowledges. As such, I conducted cases study not of activisms and activist texts but of their uptake within TF scholarship. My approach was validated by my ability to recognize and identify field-building practices – citational guidelines, CFPs, anthologies, conferences, and job ads – that shaped the emergence of the discourse of TF in the US academy in a North-American-centric way. I chose to do case studies of important textual moments in TFS, both of early foundational texts (texts that engaged in a definitional debate over transnational feminisms) and of elements of the anthologies published on TFA in 2010. This unconventional synthesis of institutional ethnography and political activist ethnography is a methodological contribution of this dissertation. It is informed by my goal of defamiliarizing the practices that North American-based scholars and researchers use to produce knowledge and the ways in which, as scholars, we orient towards TFA/K (or not).

It was this blended IE/PAE approach that led me to realize that what was ultimately more troubling than TF scholars' approaches to TFA were the ways in which movement-based knowledges were overwritten or misrepresented therein. Accordingly, I arrived back at SML with an unexpectedly stronger case for its usefulness to TFS. Given the dominant influence of Adult Education on SML, it is by virtue of its disciplinary focus on learning and knowledge production *per se*, rather than any ethically stronger stance towards movement knowledges, that SML stood to address this weakness in TFS.

3.2 Contributions to Transnational Feminist Studies (and Social Movement Learning)

The central contributions of this dissertation to TFS are discussed below. They were arrived at through the following:

a) I have presented an inductive textual analysis of the differences and similarities between the terms "international feminism/international women's movements," "global feminisms," and "transnational feminisms."

b) I have explored different understandings and implications of the term "transnational feminisms" within contemporary North American academic literature.

c) I have exposed a conflation of global sisterhood discourse and global feminist activism that I believe has stymied TF scholars from a broader engagement with multidisciplinary literature on various forms of cross-border women's and feminist organizing.

d) I have analyzed TF scholarship for its orientations toward not just TFA but TFA knowledges.

e) I offer a very preliminary typology of orientations to activist knowledges through a reading of TF scholarship on TFA.

f) I have demonstrated that there exists a gap between TFS and TFA.

My first contribution addresses the fact that many scholars, including feminists, struggle with different uses of the terms "internationalism," "transnationalism," and "globalism." I offer an inductive analysis of how the terms "international women's movement," "feminist internationalism," "international feminism," "global sisterhood," "global feminism," and "transnational feminism" are deployed within both the early TFS literature and especially during the period of 2000-2010.[112] I primarily focus on scholarly work that at least acknowledges transnational feminist networks and movements, though I also consult some of the broader

literature that uses the term TF without any reference to movements. I note the early idiosyncratic use of terms and analyze certain constellations that exist within the seemingly loose usages of these terms. The terms "international women's movement," "feminist internationalism," and "international feminism" are primarily used by scholars for more historical studies of women's cross-border organizing, especially historical works, and works that reference socialist internationalism. "Global feminisms" (GF) is used primarily for the study of activist and advocacy networks that arose around the United Nations World Conferences for Women. I also note that the global feminisms literature is not often cited by scholars who are more aligned with transnational, postcolonial, and antiracist feminist perspectives. (The reverse is also true.) I think this is a mistake. While it is true that there is a liberal, celebratory tone to some GF literature, and it does not advance as sharp a critique of some inequities between differently situated women, it does a better job than some TFS of documenting TFA and their knowledges. TF scholars would do well to consult these studies, if only to learn a little more about *transnational feminist activist knowledges* (see for example, Ali, Coate, wa Goro, 2000; Ferree& Tripp, 2006; Hawkesworth, 2006; Moghadam, 2005; Peters & Wolper, 1995; Smith, 2000).[113]

What marks the use of the term TF within this literature? While my second contribution and my answer to this question emerged in part out of the comparative analysis of the competing terms mentioned in the previous paragraph, it also is shaped by the method of textual analysis which I adopted to answer the question: How is "TF" socially and conceptually organized? Or more precisely, how was the emergence of "TF" socially and conceptually organized through daily knowledge practices within the North American academy? I analyze different understandings of the term "transnational feminisms." "Transnational feminisms" is used to

reference a form of feminist cross-border organizing. It also refers to a postcolonial theoretical feminist framework that can be applied to any object of analysis. It is also an emerging (sub)field of postcolonial feminism and WGS. All of these understandings are examined for the ways in which they influence scholarly orientations to TFA/K (or not).

The textual analysis in chapter 5 looks at some canonical and foundational transnational feminist texts, and more specifically at multidisciplinary North American English language academic literature of the first decade of the 21st century. As my graduate studies have spanned over a decade, I look back now on my earlier analysis of the different uses of this term, and I believe I was correct in predicting that the broadest understanding would win out.[114] The increase in interest in job postings, CFPs, conferences, special journal issues, workshops, and summer institutes on TF attest to this. For example, in 2014 there was a day-long conference at Barnard College, called "Locations of Learning: Transnational Feminist Practices," which included a panel on the legacy of *Scattered Hegemonies* (Grewal and Kaplan, 1994) to mark the 20th year since its publication. While the emphasis on learning was promising, the videos of the various conference panels indicate that the learning mainly addressed was that of students and scholars in the North American academy.[115] I was also correct in asserting that there was something unique to be found with TFA, something that challenged the lopsided ways in which "TF" was developing in the North American academy. TFA does now have its place within TFS, not only within literature that uses the global feminisms frame. TFA is arguably a sub-field within TFS. However, the emphasis on TFA has not solved the deeper problems of scholarly orientations towards TFA knowledges and epistemologies.

My analysis of the on-going discussions within and across disciplinary boundaries indicates that transnationalism is more than a framework and is perhaps at this point better

understood as a paradigm. This is true for transnational feminisms within WGS as well. Consider the tone of recent discussions of whether TF has displaced Women of Color feminism, or of how to understand its relationship to intersectionality, feminism's most recent contender for a dominant paradigm.[116] Transnational feminism is all of these: forms of feminist cross-border activisms; an emerging field as marked by special journal issues, job postings, and the like; and an interdisciplinary theoretical framework taken up for the study of various objects of analysis, which lends itself well to ongoing interdisciplinary exchange with other fields. Finally, I would argue that the sum of these factors indicates that the emergence of TF marks a paradigm shift for the field, though not necessarily away from intersectionality. Intersectionality has transnational roots, and transnational applications, and remains a dominant paradigm within feminist thought.

There are of course risks with this kind of prominence. Alarmingly and counter-intuitively, the paradigm of TF currently can recenter North American positionality and knowledge making within the field of WGS (see Briggs 2011 and Fernandes, 2013 for support of this position, arrived at differently). My contribution is both to expose how this recentering is tied to mundane everyday knowledge practices, such as choosing which sources end up on syllabi, reference lists, and cited. As TF activists have realized, transnationalism is not a *solution*, it is a fraught choice that is embraced for what it has to offer and yet must be engaged critically for what it threatens to bring as well. Examples of very recent transnational feminisms gatherings in the United States, such as the Transnational Feminisms Summer Institute at Ohio State University held in July 2014 demonstrate that my points are indeed relevant.[117]

My third contribution to the theory and content of TFS is my critique of the sidelining of "global feminisms." I expose the conceptual slippage between North American academic discourse and on-the-ground practices as seen in how the North American feminist critiques of

the academic discourse of "global sisterhood" were projected onto a broader array of on-the-ground empirical cross-border alliances between women's and feminist groups sometimes referred to as "global feminisms." Such grassroots transnational feminist organizing includes groups that are anti-colonial, antiracist, and feminist, as well as South-South initiatives. The tendency to crush these forms of TF alliance under the weight of a prefabricated conflation of the North American "sisterhood is global discourse" and "global feminisms" has harmed the development of TFS. It has cut some scholars off from a deeper engagement with the hybrid world of knowledge making that occurs within TF social movements and from the literature that uses the term "global feminisms." The multi-sited roots, heterogeneous developments, and tremendous degree of women's agency that cross-border women's alliances (sometimes referred to as "global feminisms") represent cannot be dismissed as discursive and political effects of the "sisterhood is global" discourse. My point here is not to deny that colonial and racist discourses circulate within these spheres, as they most certainly do. Rather, I wish to see North American-based scholars engage more curiously with the knowledges produced in these places and not only to critique the inevitable power inequities within. So doing, scholars stand to develop more nuanced understandings of why women persist in engaging in TF alliances despite these problems (see Bernal & Grewal, [2014] for a belated but balanced example of engagement with NGOs from a transnational feminist perspective). It is my hope that an integration of SML and TFS will help scholars to avoid subsuming or overwriting activists' anti-colonial and antiracist resistance under academic critiques of the same problems within women's cross-border organizing.

As a fourth contribution, I believe I have made a case for TFA *knowledges* – rather than just TF activisms – being engaged on their own terms and differently by scholars within the field

of TFS. Conceptually, I separate out transnational feminist activist knowledge from transnational feminist activism to expose how conventional research methods and practices push scholars to subsume activist *knowledges* within their own analyses. Inversely, my point is also that TFA and TFAK are not so separable; indeed, knowledge making is deeply entwined in TFA. There is a two-pronged emphasis here. First, I argue for the acknowledgment of the importance of TF sites for activism and knowledge production that warrant recognition on their own terms. Second, I question the politics of citation in the field of TFS. I suggest a shift in citational praxis: that scholars need to read and cite more TFA texts, even as they struggle to acknowledge collective sources of feminist knowledge built through transnational activist and advocate exchanges. I argue for a multi-sited understanding of the production of TF knowledges, which I hope contributes to a decentering of North American academic knowledge production.

My fifth contribution is the typology of approaches to TF movement knowledges. My point here is *not* that these orientations are actual, *conscious* choices, but rather, that it is precisely when such orientations are not conscious, but are embedded in taken-for-granted daily knowledge practices, that they are more likely to lead to overwriting TFAK. I suggest that scholars should re-think how we use movement knowledges, activist texts, and uncitable ideas with collective movement origins (see Briggs, 2008). How we engage with what activists are learning in struggle is an important source of information as well as of ethical and epistemological concerns.

More importantly, I hope to have issued a reminder that North American academic knowledge production may be centered, but that it is so within its own small world. However, in social movement, NGO/ized, and TAN contexts, there are more organic, hybrid knowledge practices at work. TFA knowledges are being archived and systematized by TF activists, such as

Just Advocates, who realize their import and for whom the crossing of academic-activist divides is seemingly less fraught. The dangers of colonialist power dynamics over-determining this synthesis of knowledges that is underway in TFA sites of course remain a very serious threat. Movement contexts have their own dynamics of overwriting, wherein NGOs overwrite vernacular grassroots and colonial languages knowledges. The typology that I presented is a sort of continuum that moves from no engagement of movement knowledges to increasingly effective efforts to make visible the intellectual work -- [the] labor and outcome -- of TF activists. I encourage efforts to demonstrate how TFA knowledges in some cases counter North American academic feminist knowledges (see Ackerly, 2006 as an example).

My sixth contribution is beginning to map the gap between TFS and TFA and their knowledge production processes. While further empirical study of activist contexts are still needed in order to more fully understand these differences, Conway's new work (2011, 2013) and Hewitt's dissertation (2009) move in this direction as well.

3.3 General Contributions

My main findings on a) the role of everyday academic knowledge production practices, such as selecting reference material and data, citational practices, and adhering to disciplinary lines of inquiry (citational disciplining), and b) their impact on the emergence of fields, frameworks, and paradigms (i.e. their function as field-building practices) apply more generally. *I approach these academic knowledge practices as forms of conceptual and social organization*. I hope to have successfully defamiliarized these everyday knowledge-making practices and convinced the reader of the importance of looking outside of our conventional toolkits. This means turning not only towards interdisciplinary approaches but also towards different contexts and *languages* of knowledge production. A number of TF scholars have critiqued the currently

embraced neoliberal universities' imperative to globalize knowledge through international partnerships. This institutional imperative is an uncomfortable driver of the turn towards contexts outside of North America and of efforts to collaborate with non-academic "partners" which informs even some progressive efforts to decolonize TF scholarship (Swarr and Nagar, 2010, Mohanty and Alexander, 2010, J. Desai et al, 2010, and Fernandes, 2013). Whether this engagement can avoid overwriting different contexts and languages of knowledge production remains to be seen.

My analysis also exposes the unconscious national framing of discourses around academic relationships to activism within feminism and may hold some sway for those aligned with Activist Scholarship. While US-centrism is appearing on the radar of TFS, Canadian contexts need a fuller examination of this dynamic of recentering while transnationalizing (see Fernandes, 2013).

Then, too, the Anglo-centrism that I discuss in both North American TFS and more professionalized TFA is an issue with implications in many fields of study. The appearance of what Pennycook (1994) critiques as the presumed "natural, neutral, beneficial" nature of English as a common language, particularly in transnationalizing/globalizing/internationalizing projects, both academic and activist, needs to be unpacked if the project of decolonizing academic and activist knowledges is to develop meaningfully. Below, I turn to a concrete discussion of some possible future research directions.

4. Future Directions and Implications

Ongoing efforts to keep a focus on non-academic sites of TFA within TFS are important, even if only to resist the unconscious nationalism of American approaches to transnational feminisms (see Fernandes, 2013). My research shows that there is a need for the following types

of research projects, pedagogical developments, and broader reflections on academic knowledge production.

First, my analysis reveals that within North American WGS and TFA organizations there are different processes of knowledge production that occur as part of feminist struggles. These practices are often related to the processes of institutionalizing feminist, antiracist, anti-colonialist, and anti-capitalist thought. Comparative analyses of the various institutionalizations of feminist activism and thought are needed. Institutionalization of feminism occurs not only within the North American academy but also in academic and activist contexts in other regions. The institutionalization of transnational and other feminist knowledges also occurs through NGOs, TANS, and grassroots networks. Comparative research can include documentation and analysis of processes of institutionalization of feminist knowledges and of women's/feminist movements. Exploring the connection between institutionalization and the de- politicization or re-politicization of movements is also a promising research direction.

Second, regarding the importance of sustained dialogue across various social movement as well as academic-activist sites, further research is needed on TFA informal learning. Interview-based research with long-time and newer TF activists about how their learning during and after periods of engagement with UN-centered advocacy, the World Social Forum, AWID conferences, and other major forums would be helpful. Analysis of how this informal learning factored into the de-politicization and/or re-politicization of movements is an important area, especially for those who want to resist co-optation of movements. Learning through less formal networks and major transnational organizations could be studied comparatively. A better understanding of the inter-generational transmission of activist knowledge and related archiving of movement knowledges would also be valuable. Empirical interdisciplinary TFS/SML case

studies of learning and knowledge processes in TFA milieu, particularly as outlined in chapter 7, would be a valuable contribution to both SML and TFS.

Third, there is a dearth of institutional and political activist ethnographies within the field of TFS.[118] There is a need for institutional ethnographies, informed by TFS and SML concerns, on major transnational organizations such as the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID). Then too, studies of smaller TF organizations that are explicitly engaged in movement building, knowledge generation, research and teaching, and advocacy and networking would be valuable. This would provide a rich framework within which to explore competing epistemologies and knowledge claims. Choudry's work (2008), while not explicitly feminist, shows the potential of internationalizing institutional ethnography for activist groups. Political activist ethnographies would provide useful and timely research of contemporary struggles and processes of institutionalization and would stand to inform activist efforts as well.

A fourth area for new research lies in the direction of more critical scholarship on Anglo linguistic and cultural imperialism within TFA. SML and TFS scholars as well as movement actors would benefit from a more critical understanding of linguistic imperialism. An exploration of the increasingly professionalized and hybrid nature of English language NGO research, as well as comparative analyses of smaller organizations that conduct and disseminate research in non-colonial languages, might provide interesting insights and alternative models. This could include investigation of activists' citational and epistemological practices and praxis. Cross-national comparisons of the relationships of feminist activisms and scholarships would be deepened by an analysis of English linguistic imperialism. An exploration of the colonial language politics at play within TFA contexts would also help to reveal power dynamics between feminist groups operating in non-western contexts but through colonial languages.

A fifth, related, suggestion is for research, pedagogy, and curriculum regarding TF. WGS needs to re-think its critique of Area Studies.[119] Deeper understanding of cultural, regional, and national contexts outside of North America is needed, coupled with more emphasis on foreign language study being a necessary part of the WGS curriculum. Promoting joint WGS and Area Studies degrees could help integrate as a priority in formal education the decentering of knowing the world through English terms, frames and concepts. Women's and Gender Studies students can learn more directly from a greater emphasis on (vernacular) activist texts. Multilingual students can use their language skills to bring more diverse activist views into the classroom through readings in their native languages included as an essential component of their education, even in Anglophone institutions. Simple assignments such as writing English synopses of vernacular activist texts and sharing them in class are an easy way to bring more non-Anglophone feminist knowledges to students. This is a change that requires little work on the part of professors and can be easily integrated into the pedagogy and grading schemes of WGS courses.

All of the above suggestions are offered based on the assumption that the broader project of decolonizing neoliberal globalization and academic knowledge production can be advanced to a certain degree through a commitment to decentering familiar practices and introducing different learning and knowledge practices. More critical, engaged, multilingual dialogue must take place between academics, both movement-engaged and not. Such conversations need to continue across disciplinary and academic/activist divides, as well as with activists who are themselves engaged elsewhere in cross-movement dialogues. Initiatives to support such dialogues are continually emerging.[120]

5. Conclusion

Within this dissertation, academic and activist sites of knowledge and learning are engaged. The knowledge bases of TFA, TFS, SML, and IE/PAE are brought into interdisciplinary interlocution. If the final product succeeds in convincing the reader of the importance of acknowledging TFA epistemologies and taking TF social movement knowledges on their own terms, then this success paradoxically rests upon the promise of a synthesis of the admittedly incommensurable knowledge bases. There is a gap between TFS and TFA. Some of those differences are the effects of producing knowledge for different ends in different contexts. In that sense, perhaps, the gap is inevitable, and even desirable. Yet, without a more unsettling encounter, the understanding of TF that is settling to the North American academy will continue to risk unconscious nationalism and the (unwitting)recentering of North American academic positionalities and epistemologies.

I am suggesting that one way forward is to acknowledge the limitations of this collective intellectual project and settle into an "engaged learner" positionality vis-à-vis movements that are leading intensified struggles for social justice locally and globally. Such a practice requires that we learn, think, and work in concert with thinkers struggling in other languages and contexts. For TF academic knowledge production to truly be part of the broader transdisciplinary project of democratizing and decolonizing movement-engaged scholarship, a concern for how the very practices that we rely upon can tie our own hands impels us to read, think, write, and cite differently. Having done so, we can append that pesky "s" and entertain the uncontainability of transnational feminisms in a less disciplined way.

NOTES

[1] See for example the newsletter *Ajia to Josei Kaihoh* (Asia and Women's Liberation) published by *Ajia onnatachi no kai* (Asian Women's Organization) archived at http://ajwrc.org/jp/modules/myalbum/viewcat.php?cid=5. The English version of this newsletter "Asian Women's Liberation" is archived at http://www.ajwrc.org/eng/modules/myalbum/viewcat.php?cid=3. See also The Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center's *Joseitachi no nijuisseki* (Women's 21st Century) "Voices from Japan" archived at http://ajwrc.org/jp/modules/myalbum/viewcat.php?cid=1 http://www.ajwrc.org/eng/modules/myalbum/viewcat.php?cid=1). All accessed June 12, 2014.

[2] A more detailed discussion of these groups and my work is included in the opening section on activist positionality of chapter 3.

[3] For example, the newsletters that I catalogued and translated contained articles on: structural adjustment programs (SAPs); globalization; the difference between women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), and gender and development (GAD) approaches; "mail-order brides;" the impact of US military bases in a number of Asian countries; the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and early feminist responses to it; communalism and sectarian violence in India; the ethnocentrism of Western perspectives on domestic violence; media literacy trainings for women in the Middle East; analyses of micro-credit programs in Bangladesh; the difference between reproductive rights and sexual health perspectives; feminist radio initiatives in Latin American; and many, many reflections on development work, women's activism, and feminist advocacy.

[4] The branch of the Japanese organization at which I worked did not survive a recent wave of budget cuts. This means that many of the materials were disposed of as the organization consolidated two centers into one location. A staff member for the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University, where Charlotte Bunch, a foremost women's human rights activists worked, informed me that they might have boxed up some newsletters from that era. She suspects that if they have these newsletters, they are stored away and not indexed [personal communication, August 6, 2013]. The Toronto-based office of the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID) does not archive the newsletters of grassroots groups, preferring to keep the materials they need to conduct their own projects on hand in their limited office space [personal communication, August 7, 2013]. The International Women's Tribune Center (IWTC) founded in 1975 to promote women's networking and exchange has since folded. A Philippines-based group, Isis, is holding onto their collection and hoping to digitize portions of it (http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=151&Itemid=255 accessed May 20, 2014).

[5] For two very recent exceptions, see Booker, 2015 and de Onis, 2015.

[6] A few exceptions include: Tohidi in Dufour et al. (2005), Barndt (2010), and Sangtin Writers (2010).

[7] My graduate school and funding application essays explained my project as "The Use of Activist Pedagogies and Transnational Feminist Alliances by Minorities in Japan" and "The Pedagogy of the Global Discourse on Women's Human Rights."

[8] By "Anglo-American" I mean the English language North American discourse.

[9] See Grewal (1999) for an argument about women's human rights that makes sparse reference to activist texts, and arguably misrepresents activist thinking on this issue.

[10] I use the abbreviation TF for both the noun "transnational feminisms" and the adjective "transnational feminist," trusting that the reader can discern the difference between the two from the sentence structure.

[11] See Namaste (2009) for an alternative approach to theory building that is empirical and grounded in the realities and priorities of affected communities.

[12] All quotations are taken from the reprinted version: Asian Women's Association. (April, 1986) Declaration: Asian Women's Association. *Asian Women's Liberation Newsletter*, No. 7, p.2.

[13] Recall that at this meeting many Western feminists were arguing that patriarchy was the main source of women's oppression, to which their Southern counterparts responded by alerting Western feminists to their blindspots around colonialism, racism, and capitalism.

[14] I am indebted to Dr. Michael Nafi for some of his methodological suggestions around questions of cross-cultural and cross-historical ways to investigate thought other than an Anglo-centric search for translatable key concepts. Investigating questions is one method to counter the focus on genealogies of key concepts.

[15] I refer primarily to classroom discussions as well as those at the annual Canadian Women's Studies Association (CWSA) conferences which I attended in 2006 (York), 2007 (UBC), 2009 (Ottawa), 2012 (Waterloo/Wilfred Laurier).

[16] As introduced above: the first use of transnational feminisms is descriptive and sited in movements; it is distinguished by its focus on transnational feminist activisms/advocacy. This descriptive usage references cross-border forms of feminist/women activism, solidarity, exchange, struggle, advocacy, and organizing. These endeavors occur in the scattered yet connected sites of transnational feminist/women's movements, groups, networks, campaigns, and NGOs throughout the world. This usage of the term is not necessarily one adhered to strictly by TFA themselves, rather it appears as a descriptive term in Anglo-American academic feminist scholarship on cross-border organizing. Terms such as international feminisms, international women's movement, global feminisms, and global women's movements are also used, often interchangeably. This will be discussed in chapter 5. This first usage of the term "transnational feminisms" refers to TFA as a phenomenon in and of itself, and one which is an object of study for some TF scholars, particularly sociologists. The second usage of transnational feminisms is found in North American scholarship. It is used to refer to a conceptual/theoretical framework, a critical discourse, and sometimes to an emerging sub-field of postcolonial Women's/Gender/Feminist Studies operative largely within the North American academy. As the term transnational feminisms is sometimes used by feminist scholars without reference to movements or activism, where necessary, I broaden my focus to such usages as well.

[17] Most promising, from my perspective, is a special issue of the online movement journal *Interface* (http://www.interfacejournal.net), on the pedagogical dimensions of social movements, May 2014.

[18] I do not address how geopolitical, state, capitalist, and funding bodies' interests impact upon the emergence of TF, as this is the type of analysis more readily found within TFS. See for example, Alexander & Mohanty (2010) and Fernandes (2013).

[19] It is not my scholarly intention to rehearse the debates around competing terms such as multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary. Nor do I address the debates about the ways in which WGS have sought to use or frame interdisciplinarity as a mechanism which protects the field

from certain kinds of institutionalization or methodological/theoretical sedimentation. For examples of these arguments, see Fernandes, 2013; Lichtenstein, 2012; Orr et al, 2012.

[20] In my years of activist work, I had all but stopped reading academic texts. My main sources of reading were English-medium activist texts. When teaching about feminism in an English department at a Japanese university (1996-2002), I taught using English language articles from international women's, feminist, and NGO newsletters because they were accessible, compelling and, at the time, less laden with the overt, Western, ethnocentric feminist condescension that my Japanese students found off-putting in some of the English language North American feminist academic literature.

[21] Janet Conway's work (2004, 2010, 2011, 2013), while it does not use the language of social movement learning, does accomplish this dialogue between academic and activist epistemologies. Her early work focused upon activist learning and knowledge production in Toronto-area social justice and anti-globalization activism and more recent work addressed transnational feminist activism at the World Social forum, while maintaining the focus on activist knowledge production practices.

[22] For an accessible overview of conflict theory, see Sears and Cairns (2010).

[23] For a very recent rethinking of intersectionality see *Signs* special issue Summer 2013. Patil (2013) offers an exploration of intersectionality from a transnational feminist perspective. For an argument on the value of Intersectionality Studies as a field, see Cho et al. 2013.

[24] See the bibliography appended to the *SML Field Report*. Notable exceptions include: Chovanec et al, 2008; Chovanec, 2009; Conway, 2012; Stromquist, 1994.

[25] Three 2010 TFS anthologies on TFA will be examined in detail in chapter 6.

[26] See Hall, Clover, Crowther, & Scandrett (2012). In June, 2013, The Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning held a Conference called "Mobilities and Transitions: Learning, Institutions, Global and Social Movements," at Glascow Caledonian University, in Scotland.

[27] A search of EBSCO Academic Search Complete on July12, 2012 for variations on the terms "transnational feminis*" and "social movement learning" found between zero and five sources per combination (See Appendix A.)

[28] For a critique of NGOization from a Bangladeshi woman activist, see http://alalodulal.org/2013/05/28/ngoization/ Accessed June 27, 2013.

[29] This dual emphasis on *comparative* and *relational* analysis is consistent in and work by Alexander and Mohanty (1997, 2010).

[30] For examples see program for National Women's Studies Association (NWSA), http://www.nwsa.org/files/cfp_final2012.pdf; The Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA), http://sewsa2013.wordpress.com/call-for-papers-and-submissions/, accessed July 20, 2014), and Decolonizing Future Intellectual Legacies and Activist Practices, the 2013 conference hosted by the Critical Ethnic Studies Association, https://www.criticalethnicstudies.org/content/past-conference-materials, accessed January 31, 2015.)

[31] An example of the gap between academic and activist transnational feminisms that initially struck me upon my return to Canada in 2003 was the considerable time lag between the publication of scholarship on TFA and the periods of intense coordinated struggles by transnational feminist movements against states, corporations, and capital, and the power struggles within movements, beginning in 1975 and developing rapidly through the eighties and nineties. See for example "early" works such as Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Grewal, 1998. In her

talk "'Transnational feminisms' in Question: Bridging theoretical and activist practices" on May 28, 2012, held at University of Waterloo and Sir Wilfred Laurier University as part of the Canadian Women's Studies Association conference, Janet Conway made a similar assessment, arguing that the chasm between activist and academic transnational feminisms not only exists but that it is growing.

[32] The three anthologies are: Swarr & Nagar (2010) *Critical transnational feminist praxis*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press; Caouette, Masson, & Dufour (2010) *Solidarities beyond borders: Transnationalizing women's movements*. Vancouver: UBC Press; Roces & Edwards (2010) *Women's movements in Asia: Feminisms and transnational activism*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

[33] The activist groups with which I worked focused on three main areas. The first area was lesbian and bisexual community organizing, especially organizing retreats, workshop-planning, as well as popular education and HIV education (The Dyke Weekend, Bi-net, Women's Weekends, and the HIV handbook translational project). The second area was transnational networks on Asian women's human rights, which I address in this chapter. The third area was feminist English language education (Women in English Language Learning (WELL) and Gender Awareness in Language Education (GALE)). The heterosexual and lesbian groups had hardly any overlap. The transnational women's human rights groups were overwhelmingly heterosexual, Japanese, and resident-Korean. I knew of only two Japanese bisexuals/lesbians active in the WHR projects, one was out to other WHR activists, the other was not. The woman who was not out in the straight WHR activist circles, was, however, active in queer organizing. The bisexual and lesbian groups were much more culturally mixed, and always included Japanese and foreign women, with the foreign women being predominantly Western, and sometimes other Asian women.

[34] When I tried to introduce an African-American and a Japanese-American friend to corporate or conversational English teaching jobs, the awkward hesitancy of employers was a clear reminder that these "English conversation" exchanges were often more about proximity to Whiteness than to "native" English speakers.

[35] *Benkyokai* are very popular not only with activists but throughout Japanese society.

[36] While Japanese married women have traditionally controlled household finances, even deciding on their husbands' allotted *okozukai* (pocket money), this control of their husbands' earnings does not translate into economic independence. The divorce system usually results in a one time lump sum payment to wives, meaning that many women cannot foresee a road towards financial independence after divorce, and therefore stay married for financial reasons.

[37] Almost all of the women who did *arbeito* work at YWACN were married and supplementing their husbands' income. In fact, tax laws condemned married women to a maximum income of approximately $800 monthly, after which the tax rate functioned as a disincentive.

[38] I recall one *zainichi* woman, a prolific bilingual writer and thinker, indignantly recounting how a White American feminist interviewer had asked, "what do you want me to say about you (*zainichi* women)? Tell me and I will write it." This kind of well-intentioned blunder was considered *goman*, or arrogant, and typically of Whites and Americans. The implicit assumptions here about the importance of certain texts and audiences warrant reflection on the part of North American-based Anglophone scholars.

[39] I was active in lesbian and bisexual community organizing with collectives of Japanese, *Zainichi*, and foreign sexual minority women, but this work was more locally based.

[40] See for example, Niranjana (1992) *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context.*

[41] A number of theoretical approaches have been applied to learning. The approach that I have used in this dissertation is interactionist. Whereas the cognitive school emphasizes internal processes in learning, and behaviorist stress behavior, both of these factors are considered in the interpretivist model along with the impact of the learning environment or context (Tisdell, 2005, p. 349). The dominant epistemological approach in Adult Education is interpretivist, meaning that reality is seen as "constructed, multiple, and holistic" and truth as "constructed, contested, and culturally rooted" (p. 349-50). Another approach to learning which is relevant for this project is the situationalist approach which takes the site in which learning takes place as of central importance (Tisdell, 2005, p. 350).

[42] A standard definition of formal education is "the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system,' running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training" (Coombs with Prosser and Ahmed quoted in Smith, M. (2001) para 8, accessed February 2, 2012.

[43] Elsewhere I have referred to this as "learning by osmosis" (Lunny, 2006; Lunny, forthcoming).

[44] Consciousness-raising has been widely discussed in (North American) Women's and Gender Studies. There is a concentration of research and theoretical work on North America.

[45] I have considered how transnational feminist activist groups that begin to collaborate with states, the United Nations, or supranational organizations intend to learn how to work the system but often are co-opted or de-radicalized by these encounters. I wonder if such instances might not be an example of *intending to learn* (how to do collaborative work with state and interstate agencies) but *unconsciously learning/being socialized* (in a way which domesticates). This contradictory might be better covered by focusing on the simultaneity of two of Schugurensky's categories: self-directed learning and socialization (into the culture of for example UN-NGO relations).

[46] This contention has been disputed, for example by Barker and Cox (2002). I do not rehearse the debate over the applicability of Eyerman and Jamison's specific framework to other movements. My purpose here is simply to introduce this important academic study which models serious engagement with activist knowledge production and has fueled efforts to document and analyze activist and movement knowledges.

[47] An example of how this struggle manifests in the classroom might help to illustrate this point. When I teach introductory level courses in feminist thought at the Cegep (community college) level, it is one of my goals to help students begin to see that much of what they repeatedly refer to as the "lucky" or "advanced" nature of gender equality in Quebec and Canada is not a hallmark of Western good fortune or cultural superiority. Whatever gains have been made were fought for by feminists. Likewise, many of the words that that my students relate to feminist struggles, such as "gender equality" or "sexual assault," are conceptualizations that have been developed in no small part by the feminist movement. Borrowing a strategy from the labor movement, together with other feminist teachers, I have organized "Thank a feminist/thank

feminism" poster campaign on campus, to make visible the activist roots of ways of thinking and being that are mis-credited to a Canadian or Quebeçois penchant for equality. The challenge in these classroom interactions is not only to make the racist and colonialist nature of such commonsense assumptions of advanced states of gender equality, but also to acknowledge the social movement roots of many anti-sexist initiatives.

[48] In Lunny (2005), a previous interview-based research project that I conducted on three activists/community workers who became engaged in NGO work for development, it was clear that in all cases the process of professionalization included a shift in accountability towards bosses and funders and away from the constituents who were meant to be represented.

[49] See for example: http://www.awid.org/Our-Initiatives/Building-Feminist-Movements-and-Organizations and http://www.justassociates.org/feminist-movement-building. Accessed Feb 10, 2013.

[50] Janet Conway's (2008, 2011, 2013) work is the main exception here. Conway doesn't use the language of SML per se, but she does focus on a TF knowledges produced in activists sites and struggles.

[51] One of the ways the conventional structure of a dissertation has disciplined my presentation of the ideas informing my analysis is in forcing a split between theory and methodology. I have assigned SML to my theoretical framework and political activist ethnography to my methodology. In practice, there is a constant back and forth between how the two literatures inform my analysis. At times SML is used for methodological arguments, at times IE/PAE are mined for theoretical insights. This division of theory/methods is yet another binary that TF scholars have critiqued (Swarr and Nagar, 2010).

[52] Undeniably, there is overlap between these concerns. The terrain I examine is not unrelated to the main concerns addressed in TF scholarship, however, the questions which I ask are not drawn from that literature.

[53] Frampton et al. explain it this way: "First, the notion of social relations is employed in a practical manner to talk about and to investigate the actual practices of individuals, articulated to one another, as forming reflexive courses of action, where 'different moments are dependent upon one another and are articulated to one another not functionally, but reflexively, as temporal sequences in which the foregoing intends the subsequent and in which the subsequent 'realizes' or accomplishes the social character of the preceding' (D. Smith 1983: 319). These are courses of action that, while coordinated and concerted over time in the activities of people, 'are neither initiated nor completed by a single individual' (G. Smith 2006)" (2006, p. 37-8).

[54] Shifting to a how-based line of inquiry, according to Foucauldian scholar Adele Mc Whorter, "keep[s] us focused on events, practices, and regimes of knowledge in [a particular] world, insofar as we have access to them" (Quoted in Tremain, 2010, para. 24). The last clause is particularly important, reminding researchers that much remains perpetually beyond our perception.

[55] This argument will be returned to in subsequent chapters. My discussion here is intended to demonstrate the dialogical development of the methodology and of the research questions.

[56] See Namaste (2009) for a more grounded, empirical model of theory building.

[57] See Antrobus (2004) for an example.

[58] See glossary for a fuller discussion of this term.

[59] Given his claims of rich connections with activists on the ground, Waterman's curiosity seems a tad naïve and symptomatic of scholarly work that seeks to lead activism. There is really nothing puzzling about the fact that activists are engaged in practices that scholars take some time to comment upon, given institutional requirements for research and publishing practices. Blog posts and online journals such as *Interface* which encourage scholar-activists to publish research and action notes address this time lag. That books like Keck and Sikkink's 1998 *Activists Beyond Borders* were enthusiastically hailed as ground breaking is also indicative of how profound the gap between transnational activisms and scholarship on transnational activisms is.

[60] This differs markedly from the global sisterhood discourse where women unite out of a common oppression and an understanding of this oppression as global.

[61] I remember the first time I heard an activist critique the impact of participation in regional networks. It was in 1996, shortly after Beijing. I visited a woman in Nepal whom I had met in 1994 through a women's human rights tribunal organized in Tokyo. She told me that she had not gone to Beijing because she realized it was diverting her energy and resources away from the women she was working with. I share this example because it demonstrates that activists are often pursuing lines of questioning that are not picked up upon by researchers. Even Sonia Alvarez's more nuanced analysis of the effects of participating in global networks was only published in 2000. TFN had been active for over two decades at that point.

[62] I recall our utter astonishment that we might be able to receive English reports from the 1995 NGO Huairou Forum via email. We spent hours trying to figure out how to send and receive email in order to do so.

[63] There is a scattered and diverse body of English language interdisciplinary feminist scholarship produced largely in North American universities that address questions of the transnational, transnationality, transnationalisms, and transnationalization in various disciplines. Most of this work is done in women's studies, postcolonial studies, history, globalization studies, political science, sociology, international relations and geography.

[64] Jabareen's definition of a conceptual framework, in the context of a Grounded Theory approach, is: "a network, or 'a plane,' of interlinked concepts that together provide a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena. …Conceptual frameworks possess ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, and each concept within a conceptual framework plays an ontological or epistemological role" (2009, p.51). A standard definition of a conceptual framework used in qualitative research from Maxwell is "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research" (2005, p. 51).

[65] Chandra Mohanty (2003) critiques Morgan's text for its erasure of histories of colonialism; ignoring differences of context, power, and possibilities of struggle, and for assumptions of sameness of experience and struggle. She accuses Morgan of biological materialism or the "feminist by osmosis theory": implying that all women have the same experience of oppression which naturally leads them to resist sexism. As many feminists realize, and Mohanty argues cogently, feminist consciousness and feminist solidarity must be struggled for, not assumed.

[66] Political strategies involve legislative goals, petitions, demonstrations, lobbying, pressure tactics, influencing elite men in power, arguing over interpretations of existing legal language (i.e. "man" includes woman), acting as representatives or consultants to international

bodies, and even extend to overtly racist strategies such as pitting women against immigrants or Black males (for the vote). Organizational strategies included grassroots organizing through churches (as they were socially acceptable places for women to gather); formal organizing through affiliated local, national and international groups; cross-class alliance building; forming committees to explore issues; organizing departments to provide economic, social and health services to women; producing alternative media; as well as archiving personal and organizational records. Internationalization strategies would sometimes mean applying the above-mentioned strategies in an international context, such as by translating and circulating petitions abroad.

[67] In chapter 7 I explore how this might be accomplished, by using insights from SML, as well as by orienting differently to transnational feminist activisms and knowledges. TF/S, past, present, and future matter.

[68] See Briggs, 2008 for an examination of the role of Southern activists' critiques of early neoliberal structural adjustment policies in developing anti-neoliberal globalisation discourse that pre-dates Seattle as an originary moment.

[69] I make this point not to romanticize dislocations, but to acknowledge that familiarity or fluency with multiple cultural contexts and/or languages broadens one's resources for thinking critically. This can be through noticing different cultural assumptions or realizing that there is no word in another language for a concept that you want to express, among other everyday experience of living across and between cultures.

[70] A devastating global instance of this faulty analysis, one that haunts many feminist academics, is the appropriation of feminist critiques of women's oppression in Afghanistan by the Bush administration to justify imperialist invasion. It was the inability on the part of Western feminism to hear the simultaneous critiques of fundamentalism *and Western imperialism* that lead to the colonialist rationale: brown women needed saving from brown men, yet again.

[71] Yet, this does not mean granting epistemic privilege to an undifferentiated "third world activist," woman, or feminist. It means developing the ability to recognize theory, agency, and resistance in multiple languages and forms, and the capacity to sense the limits of our frames and understandings. It may also mean following a different epistemological route: a critical—not celebratory—engagement with activist knowledge production strategies that can learn from suppressed analyses and differentiate between insurgent and hegemonic NGOized epistemologies.

[72] An emphasis on transnational feminist activisms or organizing, especially approached from the transnational feminist theoretical framework in tandem with social movement learning approaches will be further explored in chapter 7.

[73] This was true decades ago, too. It is important to remember that Southern feminist activists were amongst the earliest critics of nascent forms of contemporary economic globalization as demonstrated by the analyses that they presented at Mexico in 1975: analyses that critiqued neocolonialism and the overbearing influence of western economic interests as they impacted Southern women's lives.

[74] My project, however, is not designed to introduce movement-generated thought, as much as to explain how it has remained cordoned off from so much of the TF scholarship. (The question raised by this chapter – what can be done about this disconnect? – is addressed in chapter 7.

[75] I use the language of "orientations towards" in the spirit of the suggestions made by institutional ethnographers and political activist ethnographers.

[76] I begin by taking a broad view of social movements, allowing for the inclusion of NGOs, even as I remain critical of the role of NGOization in depoliticizing TFA. I share the concerns voiced by many critical scholars around how NGO knowledges can overwrite self-organized communities' narratives of struggle (Choudry 2012; Desai and Walsh, 2010; Hudig and Dowling, 2010). For example TF NGOs that engage in anti-trafficking work have been accused of silencing and ignoring the self-representation and self-organization of sex workers, including their transnational networking (Salah, 2012). There is both resonance and undeniable tensions between some NGOs and more grassroots social change efforts. However, other NGOs are more grounded in movements and seek accountability with movements. Alert to the risks of homogenizing, romanticizing, or idealizing TFA, I proceed, cautiously and curiously, towards what TF activists and their knowledges have to offer scholars, while remaining wary of sweeping critiques of NGOs and NGO knowledge production as necessarily suspect or as subsumable under one model. Nuance has been missing in some of the critiques of NGOization, but the recent volume edited by Choudry and Kapoor (2013) manages to advance a grounded critique NGOization without writing off NGOs. See the preface and introduction in particular, which strikes this tone better than previous works. Bernal and Grewal (2014) recently published an edited volume that re-thinks the dismissive tone of some previous postcolonial feminist work on NGOs.

There is a dearth of empirically grounded literature to inform a nuanced analysis of the impact of NGOization on transnational feminist activist *knowledges*. I think that only a body of empirically grounded case studies can offer the kind of insights needed to clarify the politics of knowledges produced in struggle for social justice, given the contemporary political and economic forces that seek to appropriate and overwrite insurgent knowledges.

[77] This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7, where we will see that there are often non-conventional epistemologies and accountability mechanisms at play within grassroots social movements. Donor-funded NGOs and TANs often operate with epistemologies and accountability mechanisms that are more familiar to academics, especially those that work in English, with governments, or with international development agencies and the United Nations or its agencies.

[78] From early 2000 there was a steady increase in journal articles on this subject (TF).

[79] There are different emphases in the body of TFS literature that eschews a focus on movements. They include a focus on film, literature, subjectivities, sexuality, etc. Some of these approaches have been discussed by Mohanty and Alexander (2010) and Fernandes (2013). As my dissertation focuses on orientations to transnational feminist activisms and movement knowledges, I do not analyze these other non-movement related foci of the wider TF scholarship.

[80] While it is an interesting line of inquiry, I am not here engaging in an interrogation of how the concept of "practices" functions in academic research and theory. Interested readers might start with Turner, S. (1994) *The Social theory of practices: Tradition, tacit knowledge, and presuppositions*.

[81] The "scare" quotation marks function here as a reminder of the risks and misrecognitions associated with the imposition of contemporary categories upon historical contexts.

[82] Matsui was a prolific journalist and the most prominent activist in Japan's transnational activist networks in the 1980s and 1990s. Before her death in 2003, she headed both Asian

Women's Association in Japan and the Japan Asia Women's Resource Centre which planned regional WHR conferences for which I volunteered as a translator and conference organizer.

[83] Zed Books publishes books marketed to NGO/movement practitioners.

[84] Personal communication, Dr. Rachel Berger, June 19, 2014.

[85] "Crisis" here refers to struggles to retain the uniqueness of women's studies' relationship to activism and to its' methodologies. This crisis is also related to the loss of "woman" as the defined object of analysis, the move to the name "gender studies," and other on-going troubles with institutionalization and inter/disciplinarity (Desai, J. et al, 2010, P. 50-1).

[86] The conventionality of this dialogic/polyvocal text within feminist postmodern literary production, or anthropologically influenced uptakes of those conventions, may undermine its effect for some readers.

[87] There may be transnational dimensions to local struggles, but the activist partners are not necessarily, by definition, engaged in activist work that is conducted transnationally. It is the research partnership that is transnational.

[88] Chapter 7 will lay some of the groundwork for such a starting point.

[89] As we saw in chapter 5, scholarship that employs the "global feminisms" frame tends towards a more descriptive and celebratory tone whereas postcolonially-informed TFS tend towards critique.

[90] Based on her research, Ackerly identifies six forms of women's human rights activism: legal change; training of bureaucrats, police, etc; providing support such as shelters and education to supplement the system; education and motivation of the public to get involved; networking which "functions to leverage the strategic skills and tactical information devised in one setting for successful activism in other contexts" (2004, p. 294); and integration of women's human rights issues with other social justice agendas.

[91] The groups were organized by UNIFEM and moderated by another group (p. 288-9).

[92] The unwieldy text concludes: "This paper has been a pig to write. If nothing else, its production illustrates the tensions that exist between the processes of activist and academic theorizing!" Cox and Barker chose to circulate the paper widely and informally rather than taming it into a journal article. The article is available in various e-formats from sites that host e-books, e-prints, etc. http://www.into-ebooks.com/essay/what-have-the-romans-ever-done-for-us/ Accessed: July 25, 2012. http://eprints.nuim.ie/428/ Accessed Sept 2, 2012.

[93] If read as a preliminary sketch, many of their characterizations are familiar enough to elicit my agreement. Certainly, if scrutinized, such broad strokes claims can be challenged.

[94] I am aware that the specificities of any such disjuncture need to be empirically arrived at, not simply imposed from an Irish/ British Marxist analysis onto a transnational feminist organizing. Such an empirical study is precisely the type of scholarship that my analysis indicates is needed.

[95] An ability to read differently will emerge throughout this dissertation as an important skill.

[96] Interestingly, none of the authors usually associated with political activist ethnography such as D. Smith, G. Smith, Marie Campbell, or Gary Kinsmen are cited. Nor are Cox and Barker cited in *Sociology for Changing the World: Social Movements/Social Research* by Frampton et al (2006) a book that focuses on political activist ethnography. Cox and Barker's analysis resonates strongly with the argument advanced in North America by Bevington and Dixon (2005). Cox and Barker (2002), despite their emphasis on learning in activist and

movement contexts do not cite influential SML theorist Griff Foley. Bevington and Dixon cite Cox and Barker only once, referring readers to them for a fuller discussion of the question of "ongoing institutional constraints specific to the academy that effect a disconnect between social movement scholarship and the concerns of activists. Examples include eligibility requirements for tenure, the need to direct research toward academic peers, and increasing committee and teaching workloads" (Bevington & Dixon, 2005, p. 205). I share this observation about which authors are reading and citing whose work not because I am suspicious of any of these author's citational integrity, but because I believe that activist-oriented routes through academia are guided by some shared sensibilities and orientations, that until citable, remain submerged. Personally, this has manifest as a tension throughout my doctoral studies. With other academics who were/are grounded in activism, there is a way we talk about what we know that is edited out of many academic texts, because experientially gained knowledge is not conventionally citable. My interest in SML perspectives and my willingness to plod through the literature is shaped by its ability to make space for activist learning and knowledge in an academically intelligible form.

[97] Again here, it is not my particular understanding of theory that I am advocating, but a conscious shift in reading strategies and chosen texts, such that the theoretical nature of the writing in any text, be it a blog, social media post, website, etc. become visible as theory. Fluency in other languages and modes of communication builds this skill.

[98] Pedagogically, with diverse and multilingual students, this approach has the added advantage of allowing students to work on non-English or in the case of Montreal, where I teach, non-French texts. As a good number of students in Montreal schools are fluent in at least three and often four languages, this can greatly increase our exposure to activist ideas from other places, and through other languages, translated by students for their classmates.

[99] Some activist research is deeply embedded in struggle and may not in the first instance even be understood as research. To take a contemporary local example, when the Québec government passed Bill C 78, activists had to school themselves in what the new law meant, in what forms of resistance best responded to a state effort to curtail and criminalize dissent. This involves research, networking with lawyers, self-education, and experimentation as we witnessed in the streets of Montréal every night. Legislation can beget research on the part of those whose resistance/existence is being suppressed through legal channels. This research may rely upon and synthesize formal institutional knowledges and informal, tacit "everyday/everynight knowledges" as well (Kinsman, 2006). Whether activists consciously consider such work as "research" is an empirical question.

[100] These alliances were later strained as migrant sex workers began coming to Japan and some trafficked women settled into sex work rather than returning home to poverty and retaliative violence. When sex workers began to make choices that advocates didn't respect, advocates tried to suppress sex workers' own narratives. That research happens in TFA milieu is my assertion. *How* it is informed by power struggles between affected communities and "advocates" is an important ethical, critical, and empirical question.

[101] These two terms align with the standard distinctions between nonformal and informal education introduced in chapter 3.

[102] For example, many people walking around Montreal in the spring and summer of 2012 had a small square of red fabric pinned to their clothing. The carré rouge worn on the clothing of student activists and their allies in Quebec became a symbol of the student movement. It performed a particular pedagogical role. The carré rouge referenced the French

expression "carrément dans le rouge" or "squarely in the red" meaning that students were finding themselves in deeper and deeper debt as the government withdrew funding for higher education. Thus the red square was overtly political and pedagogical. It communicated an analysis or theory about rising student debt.

[103] I am indebted to Alexandre Baril for introducing me to the concept of Anglonormativity.

[104] I understand social relations as the social interactions that occur between people (as individuals, members of groups, as groups, or between a group and an individual) are related to each other through a network of structured relations of power, privilege and disadvantage. Understanding social relations helps us to understand: a) how power relations operate between groups; b) how social roles, position, social location, positionality, subjectivity, identity and power are reproduced; c) how interactions between individuals are shaped by social membership; and d) the power dynamics between groups. The term references both the structural nature of group relations and human agency.

[105] Some of the strengths and weaknesses of TF approaches to movement-engaged scholarship were highlighted in the analysis of *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis* (Swarr & Nagar, 2010) presented in chapter 5. Examples of movement-engaged scholarship include the work of Homa Hoodfar, an anthropologist and longtime activist with Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML). Hoodfar has conducted case studies of the Iranian women's movement, and her work is made available both on AWIDs site and in academic journals (Hoodfar, 2008, 2009, 2010).

[106] Similarly, a First Nations student in a course on Social Movement Learning told me that the only thing he sees people learning from anticolonial resistance is despair.

[107] Slatter is Fijian, Western university educated, writes in academic English, and has not given up hope on NGOs as a force against neoliberalism.

[108] I have not used the language of decolonization to describe this project. The textual emphasis taken, as well as the recentering of academic texts as objects of analysis, even if read differently, is too consistent with colonial knowledge production practices. Instead, I use the term decentering.

[109] See Grewal (1998) for an example of an academic feminist argument about human rights work by NGOs that overwrites similar critiques by activists, and cites few activist texts.

[110] For an example, see the "systematization" of feminist movement knowledges efforts by Just Associates, http://www.justassociates.org/en/generating-knowledge, Accessed June 23, 2014.

[111] For examples of transnational feminist activist and advocacy work that integrate Western feminist thought, see Isis Manilla or JASS: http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=163&Itemid=344, http://www.justassociates.org/en/resources, respectively. Accessed June 23, 2014.

[112] The terms international feminism, international women's movement, and global feminism were used interchangeably among the activists I worked with and in the Women's newsletters that I organized as my paid work from 1992-1997. Later the term transnational feminism began to be used as well.

[113] This global feminist scholarship, similarly does not often cite or reference key postcolonial and transnational feminist theorists such as Chandra Mohanty, Jacqui Alexander,

Inderpal Grewal or Caren Kaplan. In all of these texts there is but one reference to one of these thinkers.

[114] Lunny (2009) *Comparative analysis of international feminisms, global feminisms, and transnational feminisms.* Unpublished manuscript.

[115] See (http://bcrw.barnard.edu/event/locations-of-learning-transnational-feminist-practices/ accessed June 26, 2014). Videos can be viewed at http://bcrw.barnard.edu/event/locations-of-learning-transnational-feminist-practices/#more, accessed June 26, 2014.)*Frontiers* is publishing a special journal issue assessing the impact of transnational feminisms, see https://frontiers.osu.edu/call-papers#transnat%20fem, accessed June 2014) A related summer institute is being held in July 2014, http://frontiers.osu.edu/transnational-feminisms-scholar-institute-2014, or https://frontiers.osu.edu/tfsi, accessed June 26, 2014).

[116] See for example: http://feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/2013/09/12/cfa-gender-and-globalisation-what-do-intersectionality-and-transnational-feminism-contribute/ ; http://thefeministwire.com/2014/04/decolonial-intersectionality/; https://frontiers.osu.edu/call-papers#transnat%20fem All accessed July 12, 2014

[117] The CFP opens with an acknowledgement of different agencies of TF, even as it remains concerned primarily with academic knowledges: "Over the past forty years, scholarly and activist engagements of transnational feminism have reconfigured existing terrains, creating new possibilities and limitations for feminist scholars and the field of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies" (https://frontiers.osu.edu/archived-cfps, para 3). The CFP also explicitly includes outcomes for activists among its stated goals: "Our goals are to facilitate dialogue on transnational feminism's potentialities and continued erasures, as well as the possibilities of models for coalition building among feminist activists across nation-state borders both locally and globally." Tellingly, the CFP then narrows potential contributors to academics: "We welcome established and emerging scholars from various institutions and disciplinary locations who are working at the borders (both physical and epistemic) of feminist theorizing. We especially invite non-U.S. based scholars to participate in this institute to contribute to the work of decentering U.S. academic practices in thinking through transnational feminist knowledge production and engagements" (https://frontiers.osu.edu/archived-cfps, para. 3). Despite the particular welcome extended to non-US-based participants, non-Anglophone names and institutional affiliation indicate that while foreign nationals, immigrants, and diasporic feminist scholars and graduate students are attending, they are almost all *US-based*. The list of attendees indicates that only 5-6 non-US-based scholars are attending, 1 each from universities in Canada, Estonia, and the Netherlands; 1 possibly from Korea, and 2 from Japan out of a total of 84 attendees and 2 assistants (See https://frontiers.osu.edu/sites/frontiers.osu.edu/files/TFSI_welcome_REVISED%281%29.pdf, p. 17-8, accessed June 26, 2014). This example is meant to demonstrate the relevance of my findings as well as the impact of particular decision on conference themes, papers, and attendees can play a gate keeping role.

[118] A search of the EBSCO database on June 11, 2014 found no entries for the search terms "transnational feminis*" AND "institutional ethnography" and no entries for "transnational feminis*" and "political activist ethnography."

[119] Janet Conway made a similar point at a CWSA conference talk, "'Transnational feminisms' in question: Bridging theoretical and activist practices" on May 28, 2012. The conference was held at University of Waterloo and Sir Wilfred Laurier University.

[120] The stated goal of "Interface: A Journal by and for Movements" is "to learn from each other's struggles: across movements and issues, across continents and cultures, across theoretical and disciplinary traditions" (http://www.interfacejournal.net/who-we-are/mission-statement/ Accessed June 30, 2013). *Upping-the-Anti* is described as a "radical journal of theory and action which provides a space to reflect on the state of political organizing in Canada" (http://uppingtheanti.org/, Accessed June 30, 2013). The use of "journal" in the title of each initiative speaks to the idea that movement generated knowledges are serious and legitimate, both on their own terms, and as a source of resistance to the violences of imperialism, neo-liberal economic globalization, racism, and heteropatriarchy, each of which travel so well across borders. This demands the most creative, multi-sourced resistances that can be invented, revisited, and synthesized.

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Appendix A

Search of EBSCO Academic Search Complete July 12, 2012.

Search terms	Results
“transnational feminis*” and “social movement learning”	0
“transnational feminis*” and “social movement” and “learning”	0
“transnational feminis*” and “social movement” and “education”	3
“transnational feminis*” and “activis*” and “learning”	1
“transnational feminis*” and “activis*” and “education”	4
“transnational feminis*” and “social action” and “learning”	0
“transnational feminis*” and “social action” and “education”	1
“global feminis*” and “social movement learning”	0
“global feminis*” and “social movement” and “learning”	0
“global feminis*” “and “social movement” and “education”	0
“global feminis*” and “activis*” and “learning”	0
“global feminis*” and “activis*” and “education”	0
“global feminis*” and “social action” and “learning”	0
“global feminis*” “and “social action” and “education”	0
“international feminis*” and “social movement learning”	0
“international feminis*” and “social movement” and “learning”	0
“international feminis*” “and “social movement” and “education”	1
“international feminis*” and “activis*” and “learning”	0
international feminis*” and “activis*” and “education”	5
“international feminis*” and “social action” and “learning”	0
“international feminis*” “and “social action” and “education”	1